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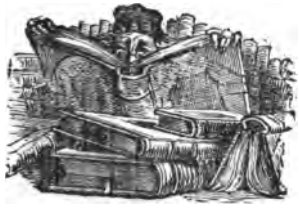
WRECKED?

A NOVEL

BY

WILLIAM OSBORN STODDARD

AUTHOR OF "ESAU HARDERY," "DAB KINZER," ETC., ETC.



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WRECKED?

CHAPTER I.

A DRIVE AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

A WELL-BUILT and pretty farmhouse, with marks of old style to give it quaintness, and in all directions around it the proofs of cultivated good taste as well as comfort.

At one of the upper front windows a young lady sat, with a book in her lap. She turned her face from page and window toward the coming of a slow, quiet footstep, and the faint rustle of a stiff silk gown.

"Is it you, Aunt Maud?"

"Yes, Nelly. A letter from Kemp."

"To me!"

"No, to me; but you may read it. He is coming home soon."

"Does he say how soon? Is there anything more?"

Nell Davenport's hand had gone out to receive the letter, but not eagerly. More as if such a taking were a due acknowledgment of the kindness which had brought Aunt Maud up-stairs. It was a white and well-shaped hand, with nothing too soft or pliable in its mould or in its defined unhesitating

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motion. There is no other riddle so complex as the hand of a woman.

"He never says much, Nelly, about what he is doing. He seems anxious to get home, though, and he asks particularly after you."

"Does he? Thank him for that. Sometimes his letters are really interesting."

"So they are. But, Nelly, the letter isn't all. I almost wish it was."

There was a half-annoyed expression in the face and voice of Aunt Maud. It was the only token of any sort of disturbance in the calm correctness of her personal appearance, from her smooth, gray hair to the lower hem of her irreproachable silk skirts.

"Indeed? Has anything happened to Kemp?"

The envelope in her hand seemed almost to flash open of itself, and the sheet of manuscript it had held spread suddenly out under Nelly's dark, searching, gray eyes; but Aunt Maud responded:

"Kemp? Oh, no! It's Link Bishop. He was at the bank, this morning, and Mr. Raynor gave him the letter to bring over. He's waiting, now, downstairs. He wants you to go and take a ride with him."

"I can be ready in a minute."

"I s'pose you'll have to go. It's a queer thing for Link to do. He's always doing queer things. You won't meet anybody."

"Now, Aunt Maud, what do I care if I do? He never asked me before, and I think I'd like a ride

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this morning. I'll read Kemp's letter when I get back."

Aunt Maud turned toward the door by which she had entered, remarking somewhat doubtfully:

"Well, you needn't mind riding with Link, just this once. His folks were old friends of your mother's."

Intentionally put there or not, there must have been a sting concealed in that seemingly simple utterance; for Nell Davenport's clear and healthy, but almost colorless face flushed suddenly crimson, and her lips closed hard for a moment.

"I've heard my mother say so."

"Yes, his father and mother are both dead now; but they were kind o' brought up with yours. Shall I tell him you're coming?"

"Do, please. I'll change my dress."

Aunt Maud was already on her way to the head of the stairs. Half a minute later, her delivery of Nell's message was replied to by a deep, strong, musical voice, with:

"Much obliged to you, Miss Henderson. Please tell Nelly, when she comes down, I'm out minding my team. They're kind o' playful. Got to keep an eye on 'em. She can come right along out."

"Yes, I'll tell her. Are they skittish? You mustn't let yourself get run away with."

"Me? Run away with? Ha-ha!"

He was striding away from the door of the old Henderson farmhouse, and his unchecked chuckle meant something, for Aunt Maud said to herself, as she looked after him:

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"They've always been great horsemen, those Bishops. I remember when his father used to drive the Mauncingville stage-coach, and they did say there was no four-horse team could get away from him."

That was a great deal to say of any human being; but, if Link Bishop's father had been a man of like pattern with his son, there was an excuse for such a popular superstition. Tall, gaunt, muscular, every line of his swarthy, saturnine face, and every movement of his awkward frame, was full of that conscious strength with which neither men nor brutes are disposed to grapple hastily. His face, nevertheless, was neither unpleasant nor unkindly, in spite of the mockery, not altogether merry, which lurked in the corners of the mobile mouth, and that played hide-and-seek at the ends of his heavy eyebrows.

Link had carefully hitched his horses before going into the house, and they were now standing at their post, as submissive, to all outward appearance, as if they had been two great, black, sixteen-hand lambs.

"If ever there was a pair of hypocrites!" growled Link, while he stroked the mane of the near horse. "You needn't show the white of your eye. I know you. I could feel your grit coming back to me, through the reins, all the way. Now, if Nelly'll come along, I'll give you about twelve miles to trot it out in. I'd just like to show her what you can do. She won't be afraid of ye, neither."

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He was not, and the black horses were well aware of it, as every horseman knows they would be. Still, a driver of less nerve and muscle might profitably have taken greater account of the areas of "white" their eyes were showing, in their quick, uncertain backward glances, as well as of the suppressed, tremulous uneasiness with which they were lifting and putting down their iron-shod feet.

There is an evil spirit which sometimes comes upon horses, and he almost invariably reaches them by way of the man whose fingers hold the reins over them. Directly from him, it may be, if any devil has been aroused in him. Through him, if he be a coward, and timidly permits himself to be used by the demon as a conductor.

There was no shadow of cowardice in Link Bishop, and he had not been used that morning as a conductor. He looked placid enough, too; but there were words creeping one by one through his bushy mustache, and there was that in his black eyes which suggested an unsettled state of affairs behind them.

"Wonder what old Raynor meant. Called me Link, too. Yes, I understood him. He said, 'Of course you won't see Miss Davenport, but you may tell Miss Henderson her nephew writes me he's coming home.' That was it. Anyhow, Nelly may thank old Raynor for her ride. Wonder how it is I never came for her before. Did I need a kick to give me the courage? That's it. I'll have plenty of pluck as long as I can feel that kick. Got it more through his eye than from anything he said,

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too. There she comes. Now, Link Bishop, don't you be a coward, and earn another kick. There's nothing mean about Nelly. Looking prime, too."

Straight as a young pine and twice as graceful, Nelly was tripping along the gravel walk toward the gate; for her preparations had been made with the swift efficiency which belongs to such a face as hers. Link was no critic in such matters, but if he had been he could have found no fault with the plain, yet very becoming dress in which Nelly had done honor to his unexpected invitation. His eyes did flash over it, admiringly, and Nelly saw the flash. just as he said to her:

"Good-morning, Nelly. There never was a better day for a drive."

"I'm so glad you came for me. It's the very thing I was wishing for."

"Is that so, now?"

"Indeed it is. I've hardly been out of the house for a week. Do you know?—Kemp is coming home."

"So Mr. Raynor was telling me, at the bank, in town, this morning. Now if you'll let me help you right in. I must keep a sharp eye on these horses."

"They seem quiet enough."

"Hypocrites, Nelly. Worst kind. I've only had 'em a couple of weeks. They're fast, though. I never mean to put 'em down to farm work. Train 'em up, and sell 'em. Hey!"

The last exclamation was in a manner jerked from him as he settled himself at Nelly's right hand, for there came a sharp and sudden strain

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upon the reins, and the fiery and powerful blacks moved jauntily away down the road.

"The devil's in 'em," he said to himself, and then he added aloud to Nelly: "See how they step! Hardly touch the gravel! I'm right glad Kemp's coming. He's one of the best judges of horses I know of, spite of his Greek and Latin. He's one of the few fellows that going to college didn't spoil."

Nelly made no direct answer. Perhaps she had none to make, and then she was noticing, at that moment, how very tightly the reins were drawing and how remarkably lightly, truly, the two blacks were stepping. She only said:

"Kemp has no horses of his own, now. Father sold his, all but the farm horses, before he went to Europe."

"By the way, speaking of Mr. Henderson, when are he and your mother coming back? They've made a long thing of it."

"They were in Naples, the last we heard. Just about leaving for Paris, on their way home. We may get another letter, before they sail, or a telegram."

"Reckon it'll be a telegram. It would if it was me to send it."

"They've had a splendid time."

"Course they have. Let me see, didn't they go out in July?"

"Yes, just after Kemp was graduated. They'd have gone earlier in the season, but for that."

"July, August, September, October — why,

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they'll yet have time for Thanksgiving turkey at home."

"Certainly. They might be here in a little more than two weeks from now. What is the matter with your horses?"

"Matter with 'em? Nothing at all. Oats. Mischief. Guess I'll let 'em out a little, though, over this two-mile level. They need a good deal more exercise than I've had time to give 'em. Now, boys!"

A good deal of Nelly Davenport's time had been spent on a farm, and she was by no means ignorant of horses. She was even fond of them, and that is the next thing to being an expert in equine matters. She had ridden behind many a fast and coltish pair in her day; but never before had she been a party to quite such an affair as was the trot of the next few minutes, over the "two-mile level."

It was a splendid piece of road, and it was almost deserted at that hour in the day. Country teams for Daynton had passed over it by the score, earlier in the morning, and they would do the same, going home, in the afternoon and evening. Now, however, Nelly and Link Bishop and his stormy pair of fast trotters had it all to themselves.

They, the blacks, did not seem inclined to "break" as yet; but their stride was lengthening, and they were bearing hard upon the bits.

"They've had bad training," said Link, apologetically. "Their mouths have been ruined. Hard as iron."

The thought in her mind was:

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"So must your arms be."

His own unspoken remark was:

"They're getting worse every minute. What can have put so much mischief into them! Two miles won't half let it out. I must give 'em the river road on top of it."

It was gloriously exciting and enjoyable, as long as neither of the occupants of that handsome light buggy was capable of such a discomfort as fear. It was well they were both sure of retaining that inestimable advantage over their black servants. Splendidly they were looking, too, those broad-chested, full-bodied, clean-limbed horses—vigorous embodiments of irrepressible animal life and action. The foam flew from their mouths, now and then, and their shining coats began here and there to darken. The buggy and its occupants, so far as mere weight was concerned, did but serve to bring out with greater emphasis the grand expression of tremendous and visibly increasing power with which they were speeding onward.

Nelly Davenport could hardly repress the exultant exclamations that sprang to her open lips, and when she glanced aside at the face of Link Bishop she came within a breath of saying aloud:

"Why, he's almost handsome!"

There was fire enough in his coal-black eyes, and an unwonted tinge of color showed through the bronze upon his cheeks; but it would have required much more than that to have made what is called "a handsome man" of Link Bishop. Most women,

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in fact, would have thought him decidedly the reverse, even at that moment.

It is quite possible some of the same women would have questioned Nelly Davenport's claim to beauty, had she made one. To be sure, her regular and expressive features had no quarrel among themselves; her complexion was clear; her form, though slight, was well proportioned; her iron-gray eyes were deep and well set under a forehead wherein was room for thought to come; her brown-black hair was luxuriant and well arranged: but there are critics in whose exacting judgment all this and even more comes fatally short of the undescribed and indescribable perfections they demand.

Link Bishop appeared to be giving all his outward attention to his team; but he, too, managed to glance aside more than once.

"How she is enjoying it!" he said to himself. "There's more in her than some folks give her credit for. I knew it, though. How it brings her out! Think of my owing all this to old Raynor!"

"All this" included a great deal more than the pleasure he or Nelly was receiving at that moment. The demon in the black team was growing stronger and more masterful with every stride they made. It could not have been sent them from the flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes of Nell, for it was the rampant devil of indiscriminate rebellion.

The river road was almost as well made and kept as the two-mile level; but it had its ups and downs, and to these were added the curves and windings

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forced upon it by the sinuous course of the unnavigable stream down there at the left.

"Glad we did not meet anybody just there," exclaimed Nelly, as they swept around a sharper curve than ordinary, where the road had narrowed along the foot of a craggy hillside.

"Room to pass," said Link. "I'll take them through the cross-road, and home by way of the old turnpike."

"Right past your farm. And by our old place. Do. I'd really like to see them."

"Looking first-rate, both of 'em. They've been putting a new wing on your old house."

"Have they? I'm half sorry. I know it's a small one, and it's old now; but then I was born there and—"

She stopped short, partly, it may be, because what she was saying had a tone in it which it did not please her to utter; and more, it is quite likely, because of the manifest exertion of muscular power required to control Link's horses. They were trotting squarely as yet; but it was plain enough that they would not have been with a weaker hand on the reins.

Another mile went by in a terrible hurry, and then it was well the cross-road, to the right, was a wide one, for the swerve into it would have thrown the buggy over had it been wheeled on a shorter radius.

"What horses they are!"

"I didn't know it was in 'em," said Link, a little soberly, "or I wouldn't have asked you to ride behind 'em."

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"Why, is there any danger? I'm enjoying it."

He looked right into her face then, and the expression of admiration on his own was undisguised and without reserve as he replied:

"You're not scared a bit? Now if that isn't splendid! Do you know what I'm going to do?"

"How should I?" laughed Nelly.

"Just you be ready, then. The big gate of your old farmyard is open, right straight ahead at the turn. I'm going to drive through it, pull 'em up against the wagon-shed, and then you jump! No living man dare take that team back over the turnpike—that is, not with you in the buggy."

"Me? I'm not afraid; but I'll be ready."

"Afraid? No, guess not, never saw anything like it."

There was no time for a complimentary remark just then, and Link was gathering his energies for a special effort of strength and skill. One moment without speech or even breathing; but the rebellious blacks were guided, whether they would or not, and with mathematical accuracy, through the open gate that fronted the turn of the road. Their furious forward strain was momentarily pulled down, only in time to snap the head of the pole between them against the side of the wagon-shed at which they were aimed, a few rods from the gate, up the farm lane.

"Jump, Nelly!"

He was on his feet at the side of the buggy and his arms were out. Her hands met his, quickly,

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firmly, without a second of hesitation, and her spring to the ground was as light and true as that of a mountain deer.

"O Link! What will become of your buggy?"

Some pieces of it would probably be kicked far enough to justify a division of the question, for the blacks were expending miles and miles of trotting and hauling power in the savagely vigorous use they were making of their heels.

Women ran out of the farmhouse, and men in the barn dropped their flails and came hurrying up to see if they could be of any assistance, but Link calmly told them:

"No use. They'll have to kick it out. Run and shut the gate, Billy. I won't use a whip on 'em till they finish their spree."

"You'd better give it to 'em then."

"Yes, sir! And cut their feed down, and set 'em to haulin' wood and pullin' a drain plough."

"Miss Davenport," said a thin, elderly woman, who had all but run in coming from the house, "won't you come in? How skeered you must be!"

"Scared?" exclaimed Link Bishop. "No more'n I be."

"Thank you, Mrs. Peters, I will, in a minute. Link, have they gone crazy?"

"Something like it. There is a great deal that's human about horses. There'll be just about enough left of that buggy and harness to pay for mending."

"I'm so sorry!"

In about three minutes more her pity for the blacks themselves overbalanced her sorrow for the

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wreck. Their "spree" was over; their vicious temper was cooling down; they were utterly helpless and a little weary; and now their discipline began. A heavy whip was no laughing matter in the hands of Link Bishop.

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CHAPTER II.

VERY HIGH CASTE.

THE doorway of the First National Bank of Daynton had a heavily armored and self-protecting look. It was the great financial institution of Daynton; it had Mr. Latimer Raynor for its president; it stood at just about the right distance, socially, from the main gateway that led into the well-kept and exclusive seeming grounds of the Raynor family mansion.

So nearly right was the distance that, in good weather, the head of the one and owner of the other could even walk home, if he chose to do so, for his noonday luncheon. No moderate compensation would, indeed, have induced him to speak of that refreshment as "dinner," and the greater part of such weather as really came called for the use of his carriage to come and go. It was only right that a man of noble birth and large possessions should keep a carriage, and ride.

The original Raynor, the founder of the house, had traded rum for skins with the Indians on the very spot where the bank building now stood, leaving behind him a lasting odor of—antiquity and nobility.

The Raynor farm had afterward occupied much of the present site of the growing and ambitious little city. This itself, moreover, had been known

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as Raynorville, until another corporate name was forced upon it by the vulgar votes of an uncontrolled mob of electors. Enough of the old farm remained in the hands of Mr. Latimer Raynor, in spite of the divisions called for from time to time by the deaths and devises of his inconsiderate ancestors, to entitle him to think himself "*the* Raynor."

He so thought himself.

They manage these things better in England, as Mr. Latimer Raynor had been known to remark. In that favored land the estate of any noble family, however acquired—the estate or the nobility—can be kept together in spite of the selfish requirements of younger sons and of daughters. In spite, even, of any fatherly sentimentalism expressed in the form of "wills and testaments."

"The original Raynor farm, sir, with the outlying landed property of my ancestor, would have made me several times a millionaire to-day, sir. Our laws are shamefully defective, sir, in their provisions for the preservation of old families."

That was a subject he could follow very far, with a good listener; but the business men of Daynton agreed that his head was remarkably clear upon every other. As clear as if they had been Mohawks and he the very original Raynor.

There was just enough about the family residence of the peculiar kind of antiquity which may best be described as "American" to relieve it of all vulgar newness, without detracting from its claim to elegance. Everything in its exterior

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seemed prepared to remark to any inquisitive passer-by :

"You may well look twice, sir. The great-grandfather of this house was rich. We are rich now. We are not common people at all."

In fact, no man of proper feeling, unless conscious that one or more of his own grandfathers had been remarkable, would have presumed to cross the threshold of that house without first wiping his feet carefully and getting quite ready to remove his hat.

Mr. Latimer Raynor could not have been called upon for either precaution, that noonday, and not only because of his ancestors. The carriage had preserved the polish of his boots, and his hat was in his hand before he reached his doorway. The latter, indeed, that he might the more easily wipe away a few beads of perspiration from a high, narrow forehead, to which much new territory had of late years been silently annexed.

The original forehead had evidently been all the while under cultivation, for deeply ploughed wrinkles and like signs of culture furrowed it from side to side, and the ever watchful crows had left the imprint of their thievish feet in the corners of the field. There had ever been much corn to steal upon the Raynor farm, and the visits of the crows had continued for generations.

Ordinarily, the height of the present head of the house was about five feet, nine inches, but he was hardly so tall to-day. He was as one pressed down a little from his rightful stature, and the first words

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he spoke to the portly, middle-aged lady who awaited his coming in the dining-room were :

"Adeline, my dear, I am very glad Henderson is coming home. I find this load too much for me."

"I 'ope so. He's been gone long enough. I do wonder whatever 'e and Mrs. 'Enderson can find to keep them so long."

"I almost said as much to him, in one of my letters. Did I show you his reply?"

"Do sit down, and eat something, Mr. Raynor. Now do. Mr. 'Enderson's letter, my dear? No, you must 'ave forgotten it entirely."

"Did I? Well, then, it was sharp enough. He said you and I had spent more time away from the bank than he had, time and again, and it was his turn now."

"Now Mr. Raynor! It is remarkable 'ow some people do forget themselves. Think of what he was when you took him into the bank."

"He held a good deal of the stock, my dear. A good deal."

"Money isn't everything, Mr. Raynor, by no means. He was nobody at all till 'e was made cashier. And then 'e must go and marry that Mrs. Davenport! 'Oo was she, I'd like to know?"

"She was pretty, Adeline, and he thought she had money, too, I've no doubt."

"Pretty, indeed! I'm 'alf displeased to 'ear you say it."

Whatever else she may have been ready to utter, in explanation of the expression of face with which

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she had listened to the name of the present Mrs. Henderson—Nelly Davenport's mother—was cut short, like an error in book-keeping, by a species of double entry. A servant came in through the rear door with a tureen of soup, and, at the same moment, a young lady swept gracefully in from the front to a chair at the table.

"Have you any news to-day, father?"

A very musical and admirably modulated voice made the inquiry, and there was every excuse for the look of fatherly pride which Mr. Raynor turned upon the questioner.

"Plenty of it, my dear. First, the Hendersons are coming home."

"Nothing wonderful in that. Are they really coming? Have you heard from them?"

"Only a telegram. Sent by Mr. Henderson's direction. They sailed from Havre, yesterday, in the *Hermetic*. I wonder why he should have selected one of the slowest old tubs afloat."

"Why are you in such a hurry to see them? I cannot say I am."

"Business, my daughter—business."

"After all, a summer in Europe may have done something wonderful for Mrs. Henderson."

"Mr. Raynor," interposed his wife, "your soup will be cold. Katherine, do not annoy your father."

"But, mother, the news. I'm sure there is more to come."

Calmly, smilingly, beautifully unexcited, and yet expectant, sat the heiress of the house of Raynor,

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while her father tried the soup, and found it hot enough for further speech.

"The news? Adeline, I have a letter from Carlton Forsythe. He and his English friend are to pay us a visit—quite a visit—on their way to the Adirondacks."

"Is it Lord What's-his-name?" asked Katherine, doubtfully.

"There is Forsythe's letter. Read it for yourself. He says his lordship is anxious to get an idea of American rural life."

"We must see that he 'as one," said Mrs. Raynor, with sudden energy, as her daughter silently handed her the manuscript. "It's not 'is family name, of course. Only 'is title. It's not at all familiar to me. But then there are so very many of them!"

"American rural life," said Katherine, scornfully. "How much of that will he find in Dayton?"

"We can show 'im all there is, my dear," said her mother. "We can at least give 'im an idea of American 'ospitality."

"We can show him the country for ten miles around," said her father, "and after that he can kill deer, and catch trout in the Adirondacks, and hunt moose in Maine and the Canadas."

"And when winter comes he can go home again with an idea that he knows all about us. Well, father, this is better news than the return of the Hendersons."

Mrs. Raynor had continued her study of Carlton

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Forsythe's epistle. It may have been that the burden of her coming duty as hostess was settling upon her ample shoulders, for she was neglecting her soup. She said :

"I liked Mr. Forsythe so much, w'en 'e was 'ere before. A young man of extraordinary capacity, I should say. And so very rich."

"But, mother, his English friend—"

"My dear! Parties, of course."

"No time for more than one. Out of season, too."

"Katherine, my daughter, the season's nothing to do with it. I'm almost glad it'll all be over before the 'Endersons get 'ere."

"By the way," exclaimed Mr. Raynor, "there's one thing I'd forgotten. I've a letter from Kemp Henderson, too. He is coming home."

"It's of no consequence—"

"Now, mother, the party; we would surely have to invite—"

There was a sudden constraint in Katherine's manner, but her mother went right along.

"Certainly, my dear. 'E's not a bad young man. His station in life will be better than 'is father's, to be sure. The family is rising."

"Yes, Adeline," remarked her husband, with some dignity, "but there are some things relating to them which we must bear in mind."

"You mean 'is unfortunate sister? I 'ope you do not suppose I forget 'er, Mr. Raynor. I do not, indeed, but it'll not 'urt young Mr. 'Enderson, if 'is own course is correct. I'm quite sure the

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family 'ave never recognized 'er, and what more could they do? Such things 'appen all the while. Every good family 'as something of the kind, and nobody is ever so ill-bred as to mention it."

Whether such forbearance could be shown with equal safety to a family which was not so very good, was apparently a question in the mind of Mr. Raynor, for he asked:

"But, Mrs. Raynor, Katherine, if anything should occur, and if you should invite Kemp—to which indeed I see no great objection—what will you do with Miss Davenport?"

"Nell?" said Katherine. "Why, just as we've always done. She's odd, but she's very much liked. That is, by those she honors with her notice. I almost like her myself."

"Are you sure she likes you?"

"If she did not she's just the person to tell me so. Why, father, are not you and Mr. Henderson on good terms?"

"He is cashier of the bank, my dear, and a large stockholder."

"Nell has nothing to do with the bank, and her mother won't be here. Is there anything to be said against Kemp?"

Mrs. Raynor's well-shaped, full-fed mouth was rounding itself in an expression of motherly disapproval, to which she gave no vocal utterance. The family sceptre, as to minor matters of social discipline, had plainly passed already into the beautiful hands of the "daughter of the house," and she held it in view during the remainder of that con-

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versation. In fact, Katherine Raynor, through four years of active "society," at home and abroad, up to this, her own twenty-first, had proved herself all that the most exacting father and mother could have asked. She did high honor to her birth and breeding. Her views of life, its aims, ends, uses; her religious principles; even the rosy-blonde type of her beauty, inherited from her mother's side of the family, along with "some of the best blood of Old England, my dear"—all were exactly to the aristocratic taste of Mr. Latimer Raynor. He could see but one imperfection in his daughter, and he sometimes forgot even that.

She had one only failing; she was a daughter!

The laws of men for the preservation of great families are grossly defective in this country, and the laws of Providence are equally so, in failing to assure them so obviously needful a provision as a male heir.

"The family name will die with me," had been a groan of Mr. Raynor. "I am the last of the Raynors. That is, of the direct line."

Other descendants of the old Indian trader had wandered hither and thither upon very indirect lines. Some of the very richer and very poorer had wandered back again, now and then. They, too, would all die, sooner or later, with all the thousands of miscellaneous Raynors, in and out of the printed "directories," but nothing would die with them.

The remaining talk at the lunch-table touched Kemp Henderson again, once or twice, and pre-

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sented quite clearly the sad deficiencies of his lot in life.

"Katherine, my dear," argued her mother, almost earnestly, "we must not speak of it to any one who does not know it already, but we ourselves must not forget that Mr. 'Enderson's father began as a ploughboy. 'Is first wife, Kemp's mother, was a farmer's daughter."

"That is the way the Henderson farm came to belong to Kemp," said Mr. Raynor. "His mother left it to him. It's worth a good deal more now than it was then."

There seemed to be very little disposition to pull in pieces the absent bank cashier himself, but an unanimous verdict of "ambitious, managing, aspiring," was duly rendered against his wife.

"I must say, though," admitted Mrs. Raynor, "I'd never know Nell was born on a farm."

It was well to keep sharp eyes upon the plots and ambitions of a dangerous family like the Hendersons, and Mrs. Raynor was the woman of women for such a duty. Established upon an unapproachable watch-tower of social elevation, and endowed with all but microscopic inspectory vision, she was always urged to faithful vigilance by the obligations flowing into her with the pure tide of her English blood.

Her husband had been the first of all the Raynors to import a wife, although some of them had been known to bring back with them from Europe large and valuable assortments of other merchandise.

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Her own descent among the inhabitants of Daynton—formerly Raynorville—had been a social event of rare importance. She had come down—or over—some thirty years ago, in all the bloom of youth and beauty, from "one of the best London families, very 'ighly connected."

The Daynton people never dreamed of guessing what that might mean, and, as time went on, a sort of sacred mist or mystery arose around the memory of that high London family. There is really nothing else so goldenly old and high as uncertainty.

The noble house of Raynor possessed, therefore, in its imported treasure, a proud-eyed, stately, weighty dame, admirably fitted to sit at the head of its dinner-tables and to advise its lovely heiress with whom and with what it would be wise to dance twice-running during the same evening.

Mr. Raynor did a fair share of the talking, but his face continually darkened with a curious succession of flitting shadows. It might even have been noted that one of these quick darknesses seemed to be summoned, and to come and go at any mention of the magic word "Henderson." When, at last, however, he arose and walked out of the house, he went with a firm step and a head proudly erect.

That is the very way in which men sometimes walk when they do not wish other men to perceive the fact that they are carrying something uncommonly heavy. He walked exceedingly straight, but he muttered something to himself.

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"It will be a dreadfully expensive affair. To come just now, too. Henderson coming home. I shall be ready for him. Every day counts now. It would never do for me to sell real estate. Nor to give a mortgage that would be recorded. No, I am all right. I can manage Henderson. He will be perfectly satisfied."

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CHAPTER III.

KEMP AND HIS FRIENDS.

"MERE gambling, my boy. It's wicked."

"No doubt of it; but then—"

"There's no 'but then' about it. I'm just the man to preach. So is Lord Bulleshue. We've closed out every share, and quit. That shows we're sincere. Come now—"

"Follow your pious example? Too late. I ordered my account closed yesterday. Last thing I did."

"Did you? Ah, yes. I see. You're going home, we're leaving town—same thing. It's wicked to gamble in stocks. Are you bitten badly?"

"Oh no, not that. I didn't say I'd been bitten; but I'm out."

"My dear boy, if you're out of funds you can draw on me. Hope you will. I've lost nothing to speak of."

"Don't need any. Thank you all the same. By the way, Forsythe, do you and Bulleshue dine at the club?"

"Not if you'll make it three and join us at the Montmorency. What do you say? Then Wallack's or anywhere else. Bulleshue?"

"One moment, my boy, till I look at this. It's the most remarkable thing!"

"What is it, then?"

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"Never heard of the like, indeed. Do you know, I'm actually taking out as much as I put in?"

"That's more than I can say. Henderson's as mum as a post over his own sufferings."

"Give you my word," said the young gentleman referred to, "I'm all right."

They were three men worth looking at. Forsythe was manifestly the senior of the party, although he could not yet have seen his thirtieth birthday. Such years and experience as had come to him had but put a sort of rare "finish" upon his clearly cut, refined, intelligent features. A little too dark, perhaps, and he was somewhat slender in person; but he was, nevertheless, a strikingly handsome man.

As for the next in age, there is but one race whose family trees throw off such side-shoots as was Lord Bulleshue. More years than the twenty-five he might claim would be required to bring his vigorous manhood to maturity. He was not "finished" at all; but there was clearly the making of a man in him, if circumstances could be induced to chisel him out to completion with care and good judgment. A man he would then be of six feet in stature, and with breadth and weight to match. There was a great chuckle, just now, behind his yellow beard and mustaches, as he repeated:

"Most remarkable thing! I've seen the great American Bourse, clean through, and it hasn't cost me a shilling. Forsythe, do you bet on anything else in this country?"

"You ought to know, I should say."

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"That may be. My memory fails me. My mind totters. Look here, Forsythe, is that figure meant for a seven?"

"Precisely."

"And is that the accustomed token for dollars? If it did but stand for pounds, now! That's one disadvantage of a bank account in this country."

"Suppose you were in France—"

"And it stood for francs? Why will you suggest anything so horrible! Now, then, did you not say you were ready for something?"

"I am. Henderson isn't. What do you say to the park, before dinner?"

"That'll do, my boy. How many girls did I fall in love with yesterday? Never saw so much beauty in all my life. It's very remarkable."

"I counted for you, up to nineteen. No room on my pencil for any more notches. Henderson, my dear fellow—"

"O yes, I know what you mean. I'll quit. I've had enough for once. Positively, I am out."

"Beg pardon. I don't mean to meddle."

"It's all right. I'll come to the Montmorency. Must put in an hour or so more down here, settling up. Is it to be six o'clock?"

"Sharp. That'll give us plenty of time. If you're not on the hour I'll order for three. Don't fail us now."

In a minute or so more Lord Bulleshue and Carlton Forsythe were in a cab, going up-town without any perilously rapid motion, and Kemp Henderson was left to his own devices.

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He was younger than either of his friends, but the end of his college course had landed him well inside of his twenty-second year. Partly, perhaps, because it had been the third course of the kind upon which he had entered. The previous two had been interrupted, in one way and another, and there had been long "vacations" not provided for by the usual order of collegiate affairs.

He was not a "Wall Street man;" but he had a singular look of being to the manner born and entirely at home, as he stood by the telegraphic price-indicator, in the business parlor of the great stock gambling establishment. A bankers' and brokers' office they called it, commonly.

A rich young man, recently graduated with honor from a respectable American college, is apt to be a peculiar animal to be rashly turned loose upon the world, and he is very sure to know that he is peculiar. Suppose one should set free among the stars a young comet, with the knowledge that he was a comet and with as little conception of the course he ought to pursue as a three-months-old Newfoundland puppy has of his. To be sure, the Milky Way is not Wall Street, and there are no young-lady stars.

Kemp Henderson was no comet, and did not think himself one, and he had long ago escaped from puppyhood. He was even a well-cultivated young man, all things considered, and a highly moral one, thoroughly trained and indoctrinated to the devout worship of the best social idols, though

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as yet but faintly instructed in any higher kind of worship.

In person he was shorter than Forsythe or Lord Bulleshue, but broad and well proportioned. He was neither as light of color, in hair, eyes, or complexion, as the one, nor yet as dark as the other, and he lacked an indescribable something which they both possessed. He could not freely have counselled any man, as could Forsythe, and he could not have laughed at anything in the wide world so heartily and yet so politely as could the bright-faced Englishman. Those two were absolutely sure of themselves, and Kemp Henderson was not. They had succeeded in bringing their idols, social or otherwise, whatever they might be, into some kind of subjection, and were therefore disposed to regard themselves and be regarded by others as owning the whole lot. Kemp had not been in the world long enough for that, as yet. His idols were above him, some of them, and others were beyond his reach. It was safe to say, therefore, that he had before him the sure agony of all worship of idols, that of discovering their nature and value, one by one. He was now saying to himself:

"I've quit! But I'm glad I kept my own counsel. I don't quite believe my own luck, somehow. I only put in two thousand, counting all I made before, and I've nearly six times as much to take out."

A heavy profit on his senseless bets and ventures, and yet his had been the one sombre and discon-

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tented face among those three. That did not speak any too well for him, and it was no wonder it sent his friends away with an idea that he had been sharply "bitten."

They were discussing the matter now, as they rode up-town, and their joint conclusion was expressed, sympathetically, by Lord Bulleshue:

"You're right, my boy. I saw it in his eye. He's been hit harder than he wants to let us know. Plucky fellow. It hurts; but he won't make a sound about it. Do you know, I must say, I like him?"

"So do I. Of course, I do. But we needn't waste any sorrow. He's an only son, and there are plenty of resources to fall back on. What may pinch him, just now, is the fact that his father is in Europe. He may have to wait a bit for his supplies."

"That won't hurt him. Necessary part of his education. Do you suppose the oysters can possibly be as good to-night as they were this morning?"

"If we wait 'till six before we eat anything."

"I'll do it. But the girls in the park, to-day—"

"Same ones, perhaps."

"Never! I've not seen the same girl twice since I came ashore. They're all born at about eighteen in this confounded country, and they bloom for fifty yards or so, as they go by you, and then they vanish. No, my boy, it'll be a new lot."

"There were scores of pretty girls in Daynton, the last time I was there."

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"Ah? Dangerous community to pause in. Is there any easy escape to the mountains?"

"Easy enough; but we must give our friends a fair chance to show their hospitality."

"Raynor? Raynor? Good name. Only one daughter, you say, and dangerous?"

"Very!"

"Seventeen? Was that it? No, I'm sure I finished the second dozen. But couldn't we safely eat something before we go?"

"If you'd ever control yourself when you get among oysters, we might try a very few."

"I will. Only seventeen."

"A dozen'll do. More than that would spoil your dinner for you."

"I'm not proposing to eat them! Oh! It's the oysters you're counting. Well, now, of them, for instance, a dozen'll do. Small ones."

Lord Bulleshue's mind was evidently divided in its reachings out after happiness. The wonderful beauty of American girls was pulling it on one side, while the powerful seduction of American oysters refused to let go of it upon the other. But he would live till dinner-time.

Meantime, Kemp Henderson was as good as his word, giving to his high-toned friend the broker and banker, as an excuse for so winding up his operations, the fact that his stay in the city was drawing to a close.

"All right, Mr. Henderson. You've done very well, I'm sure. We shall be happy to execute any orders you may send us by mail or telegraph."

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"I can't say about that. I'll leave the even ten thousand on deposit. Will you be good enough to let me have the remainder in bills?"

"Yes, or you can use our check at your own bank, you know?"

"I prefer the cash."

"I see. Bills to pay before leaving town? Ha! ha! That's the way the money goes. But I hope you've enjoyed yourself."

"Yes, I've made a season of it. Saratoga, Newport, Long Branch, half a dozen other places, and wound it up with New York and the Stock Exchange."

"And going home with money in your pocket. I declare, you're one of a thousand!"

There was no doubt of that; but Kemp's unspoken comment was, as he buttoned up his wallet of large bills in the safe-keeping of his inner breast pocket:

"The rest'll be safe here. I'll never draw for a cent of it through our bank. Not that I'd mind having father know; but then, that woman and her daughter!"

If he were speaking of Nelly Davenport and her mother, it was as if the latter were his father's idol rather than Kemp's.

He walked out of the temple of Mammon slowly, and did not call for a cab. One can think better on foot than in any kind of carriage, and Kemp Henderson was thinking. There were subjects enough for thought or observation, all around him, as he strode on up Broadway, and it was odd, slightly,

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that the soul of such a youth should stray from the busy rush around him, with all its tokens of activity and power, of wealth, fashion, and feverish excitement, and wander off to a pretty town like Daynton. He said a little raspishly to himself :

" I will be there. I will do my part, too, no matter what comes. Yes, it's time I knew the whole truth. Anything would be better than this. No, I've not seen one like her, among them all. Don't I see, too, why Carlton Forsythe is dragging his tame Englishman up there ? Does he think I'm blind ? Take me for a fool ? Shouldn't wonder if he does. Don't know, yet, but what I am one. What will Bulleshue think of her ? He says American girls beat the world. But then he says the same thing of our fish and our game. Anything he's eating or looking at is the best thing he ever saw. I don't think she'll be dazzled by him. Yes, I'll be there ; but I won't let Forsythe dream that I understand what he's up to."

The current of his thoughts and memories changed a little, during two or three minutes of silence that followed. There was less bitterness in his tone when he muttered again :

" Nelly ? Well, no, she doesn't exactly hate me ; but she knows how I feel about it. That's one real good thing about Nell. She doesn't love father much better than I do her mother, either. Glad there's one point we agree upon, seeing we've got to live in the same house."

He was thinking of Nelly Davenport, and not

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altogether unkindly ; but she was not at that moment thinking of her step-brother.

Link Bishop had but just completed the sharp lesson he had given his rebellious blacks, and they were quietly submitting to be haltered, and led away. Mrs. Peters repeated her pressing invitation to the house, and Link said :

" Please do, Nelly. I'll have another buggy ready in a few minutes. Only one horse, but it'll carry you home."

There was a crestfallen look on his face, and a treble allowance of awkwardness in his manner ; for he had seen her suppress a smile when she glanced at the vehicle which was to carry them. It was an affair whereof the entire exterior was in keeping with that of the farmhouse, in whose side-yard it had been accustomed to brave the weather, and no " new wing" or any other new thing had been added to it for many a long year.

" Never mind, Link," she said to him, consolingly : " We'll tell Aunt Maud we made a trade."

She was turning away, as she spoke, and Link looked after her admiringly. The thought he did not speak was :

" I do believe she'd go riding with me again, if they'd let her, behind that very team !"

Nelly passed on into the house, while Mrs. Peters, at her elbow, continued to assure her of the terrific risks she had undergone, and of how great a shock to her nervous system it all must have been.

" Link's a good fellow, Miss Davenport ; but he's

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dreadful keerless about hosses. He'd drive anything on earth he could git a bit into. But ain't it kind o' singular you should fetch up, this way, at your old place. You hain't been here for ever so long, hev ye?"

"Not inside of it. Not for many years."

Mrs. Peters was a ready talker, and she rattled on; but Nelly's mind was hardly set upon listening. Her inner sight was searching the house, upstairs and down.

If she had put her observations into words, and uttered them, they might have been:

"That was my room. I've not been in it since I was twelve years old. That was mother's and father's. He died there. Oh, how well I remember! Little Willy died there, too, and the baby. I can just recall that. Grandmother used to sit in that corner. Over the kitchen mantel — that's where grandfather's gun hung. They never took it down, after he put it there the last time. I wonder if it's there yet. Seems to me it must be."

"I s'pose you don't remember much about things on the farm," broke in Mrs. Peters. "There was the old orchard, now. We had it cut down, last year, and we've sot it with young fruit; but they ain't a bearin' yit. We've put a new curb onto the well, and now the new wing's nigh done. There'll be more room in the house than there ever used to be. I will say, I mean to keep the oven jist as it is—"

"Now, Nelly?"

"I'm ready, Link."

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"And I jist want to tell you, Link Bishop," remarked Mrs. Peters, decidedly, "it's a downright shame for you to put any livin' human bein', if their necks are worth anythin', behind them cantankerous blacks o' your'n. If I was Miss Davenport I'd never let you take me out a buggy-ridin' agin."

"I'm sure he drives very well, Mrs. Peters. I was not at all frightened."

"You'd ort to ha' been, then."

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CHAPTER IV.

A FLOATING WORLD.

OUT at sea!

The great, iron steamship *Hermetic*, on her second day out of port, was cleaving the strong billows of the Atlantic with that grand air of settled purpose and conscious power which belongs to the ocean monsters of this latter day.

She was truly a "great ship," and her imposing exterior was fully supplemented by her inner completeness. The impression to be made upon a casual investigator was as of something almost royally gorgeous—so long as the inspection should be confined to the cabin and its proper dependencies, and not permitted to meddle rashly with the steerage and what might be called "the underworld" of nautical economy.

Upon a sofa in the cabin, as the steamer bore them westward, sat a lady and a gentleman, side by side, and they were discussing not only the *Hermetic* but her varied human contents.

"No, my dear, she is not fast; but then she is so very safe."

"She's not at all crowded with passengers, Mr. Henderson. Any popular boat would be, at this season of the year."

"Now, pet, I'm glad of it. I hate a crowd.

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Besides, there are more than a hundred emigrants in the steerage."

"I'm sure that's not many, for a ship of her size."

"Everything is excellent, my dear."

"So it is. I'm satisfied. I do hope, though, it won't be a long voyage."

"Of course not. Can't be."

"Some of the saloon passengers seem to be nice people. Look at that one, now. The tall, dark man, with the white beard and mustaches."

"Some kind of a military man, dear. A returned East Indian officer, I should say. It's always worth while to get acquainted with such men. Should you call him handsome?"

"For an old man, decidedly."

"Don't be deceived by the color of his hair, darling. He is no older than I am. What a bronze the sun has given him, though."

The subject of their remarks was by all odds the most distinguished-looking person among the three-score and more of strictly first-class human souls carried by the *Hermetic* on that trip. There were some very fine specimens on shipboard, considering their station in life as declared by their place, to be found by intelligent search among the second class and lower organisms in the steerage; but there was nobody else in the cabin that resembled that man.

In the steerage? Down among the emigrants?

Yes, indeed, right down there. One black-eyed fellow, for instance, who had led a regiment for the "Commune," and had been in hiding ever since.

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He had led an orchestra before that regiment chose him for its colonel. Then there was a ruined count or so, as is not uncommon. Three of the kind of Germans known as "barons," every man of whom had borrowed the money to pay his passage, and expected to grow rich in America by "giving lessons" of one kind or another. Some fine-looking peasants from Alsace, and one entire, old Norman family, root and branch, with a deal of honest beauty in their now melancholy faces. Ancient blood was theirs, indeed; but their ancestors had failed of being on hand to obtain a share when Wise William gave away the stolen lands of England, and so their after generations, to the present, had been accustomed to the pruning of vines instead of the collection of rentals. As for the other steerage passengers, they were well enough—nothing but men and women and a few children.

There was truly a strong suggestion of the old soldier in the manner and appearance of the man who had so aroused the curiosity of Mrs. Henderson and her very affectionate second husband. It would not have called for any violent exercise of the imagination to have pictured to the mind's eye his erect, lithe shape, uniformed, epauletted, sabre in hand, under the glowing East Indian sun, leading to the charge some turbaned regiment of Sikhs or Goorkhas, or even quelling a stupid mutiny among his own Sepoys. A good face his, for a commander; there was in it so much of patience, intelligence, kindness, as well as of unmistakable courage. No wonder the eyes of any woman should

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rest a second time upon such a front as that, or that any man should feel quite willing to drift toward some sort of an acquaintance with its owner, through the tangled incidents of a voyage. Mr. Henderson, senior, however, was not a person accustomed to much "drifting," if his square-jawed, resolute face did not belie him. It was quite likely he would take into his own strong hands the steering of any purpose his mind should build and launch for him.

He, too, was a man worth looking at, and there was a strong likeness-in-unlikeness between him and his son Kemp. Almost a sufficient resemblance for the identification of either of them by any one who might happen to know the other; but the second generation had lost—or gained the absence of —some of the more notable possessions of the first.

There was nothing dreamy or uncertain about Kemp Henderson's father, and there never had been. Nor was there any sign of weakness, except that which is inseparable from a certain degree of sturdy coarseness. The better strength requires refinement. Iron is not steel, and the strength of this man was manifestly that of iron—an immensely useful substance, but sometimes brittle under sudden blows, and apt to contain flaws.

It would need some heat and hammering, perhaps, to fairly ascertain the metal of his son; but there was no visible coarseness in Kemp's face. His father was thinking of him that morning, and spoke of him, and the mention of his name brought out, as a matter of course, a reference to Nell

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Davenport and the others at Daynton who might be supposed to be in expectation of the *Hermetic's* arrival.

"I've a notion, my dear, that Nell and I will be better friends, after we get back. I've never exactly understood her, or she me."

"Now, Mr. Henderson, she's odd. I don't understand her myself. Kemp, too—but then he's hardly been at home, since our marriage, more than a few weeks at at time."

"I doubt if he will be around there much more, hereafter. I must have a square talk with him, first thing. It's time he made up his mind what he's going to do."

"You've spoken about taking him into the bank."

"Hardly do, I'm afraid, unless there should be other changes."

"Other changes? Mr. Raynor? You don't mean—"

"Raynor? O no. He'll stick as long as he lives. But I see no opening there for Kemp, now, if I deal fairly with all the rest."

"Have you other plans for him? You've not mentioned them to me!"

The soft, tender, half-reproachful tone and look were very becoming to the style of Mr. Henderson's second wife.

"There's nothing to tell you yet, my darling. You shall know at once as soon as there is. We must get there, first, and I must have my talk with Kemp."

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"When we get there? O Mr. Henderson, I get impatient, positively, dreadfully impatient, at times."

"Only a few days, my pet."

"I do wish we were in a faster steamer. We might even have waited for one."

"And been so much the later in getting home? No, sweet, I'm satisfied. She's not so fast as some; but she was built for safety, and that's a good deal. Strength and security everywhere. Water-tight bulkheads. Lifeboats. Couldn't sink. Couldn't be wrecked. No use in being insured against accidents."

"I'm glad to be safe, but I'd rather be safe in Daynton."

"So would I, my dear. I shall hardly feel like myself, now, until I have had a look at the books of the old bank and at some other things."

There was an expression almost of uneasiness upon his face, as he spoke; but his wife did not see it, for she was once more glancing at the tall and soldierly man, and a curiously dreamy look was in her own brown eyes.

They were very different from the dark gray ones of her daughter Nelly. There was hardly a movement of them which did not vouch, moreover, for the mother's more careful training and profounder skill in the proper use of eyes, and something similar could have been remarked concerning her management of every other feature of her well-preserved and somewhat showy beauty. She lacked, to be sure, the stateliness, the consciousness of so-

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cial position, that requisite and enviable manner, so difficult to acquire, which subtly expresses :

"I am in the habit of looking down on others."

Mrs. Henderson was a woman who would have given a great deal for that last degree of polish. She felt now that some of it must result from so long a tour in Europe. More might be developed in the new house her husband was building out of his old one in Daynton. She had other hopes in that connection, and some of them had hovered at times around the head of her daughter. They had received small encouragement to alight there, however, for Nelly had singularly refused to develop any genius for "society" or any ambition for its glories.

"My dear, if you do not mind being alone for a short time, I think I will go to the smoking-room."

"Do you feel at all seasick?"

"Not yet, darling. Do you?"

"No, indeed. I had so little when we came over, I almost hope to escape it, this time."

"The ship is so steady, and the weather is remarkably fine."

A few more words, all of them very tender, and she was alone with the two or three dozen other cabinites who were so aimlessly coming and going in and out of that ocean-going "drawing-room." There was a marked variety of them, and Mrs. Henderson had already well begun the performance of the set duty, the laborious pleasure, of studying deeply their several exterior indications. It was a

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matter for the full accomplishment of which she was likely to have both time and opportunity, unless the safe, slow bulk of the *Hermetic* should be seized by some unlooked-for fever of speed.

"Some of the ladies are really well dressed," she said to herself. "Almost all of the men look as if they had seen something of the world. But that man! There is something very remarkable, indeed, about him."

There was, although it was something not at all easy to define and express. He now seemed to be growing weary of promenading the long cabin, with his hands behind him. He could not have been aware that he had been studied so zealously, for there was a far-away look over his face, and his dark, deep-set eyes took little apparent note of the nothing-at-all that was going on around him. Other people, although he knew it not, would be sure to notice an indifference so rare, and it would surely force upon them a high opinion of him—or at least a high idea of his own opinion of himself, which is almost as good as far as a large majority of the human race is concerned. The best-dressed people are generally the best aware of the difficulties in the way of attaining utter contempt for the society one may happen to be in. It is perhaps the last degree attainable in the Free Masonry of social culture.

Out of the cabin and up and out upon the hurricane deck slowly strolled the tall gentleman from India—if Mr. Henderson had guessed rightly as to the region where he had been sunburned—and now

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he was standing near the rail, well aft, gazing out eastward, over the long rolls through which the ship was ploughing her steady way.

"Fine weather, sir."

The words came from one of the ship's officers, who happened to be for the moment unoccupied, and they were an unconscious recognition of exceptional "character."

"Very. Not much danger of anything else at this season."

"Can't say about that. Storms come when they please, sir."

"Do they? H'm—I didn't know that."

It is one of the unexplained marvels of human speech how very much some men can pack into a mere word or so. The men who can do the required packing are rare; but they come, now and then. They make other men hear a world of things which they do not say. They are remembered, but cannot be quoted. In the present case the ship's officer heard all distinctly; but he replied with a strictly professional remark about the great discoveries making, latterly, as to the laws which govern the movements of storms, and he seemed in no way surprised at the luck it brought him in the shape of certain shrewd observations concerning the operations of cyclones in the Eastern seas.

"Did you weather it?" he asked, when the stranger ended his terse, clear notes of the force and direction of some fierce wind he had watched.

"Weather it? No. The ship went ashore."

"Mainland?"

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"Ceylon. Five hundred coolies under the hatches."

"Didn't they get a chance?"

"That was what they were battened down for. They'd all have been jumping overboard if they'd had their own way. Beached the hull, 'way inside the worst surf. Let 'em all out then, and saved more than half of them."

"Break up right away?"

"No, she was teak-built. Wood is better than iron to take pounding. She held together a good deal longer than this craft would."

"Well, yes, on a lee shore, give me wood; but out at sea, any weather, give me the *Hermetic* or something like her."

The stranger seemed pretty well up in the question of naval construction, and all alive to that or any other which came to the surface. His talk with that one officer could not be a long one, of course; but the ship's company was a mixed one, and whichever way he turned there seemed to be a man of some kind temporarily at his service. Within a reasonable time he had been seen to converse with the French captain, the Dutch "master," two Spanish passengers, the steward's Sicilian "second," and all in their own tongues, to the use of which they were born.

During much of that time Mr. Henderson had his eye on him, with steadily increasing interest. He even tried, in a quiet way, to pump the captain; but all he obtained from him was a free translation into sea-going French of what might have been the

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name by which the stranger was entered on the books of the *Hermetic*. The punctilious etiquette of the captain's position was in the way of complete success.

"H'm. Well!" said the robust banker to himself, as he turned away, "I won't intrude on any man. There he is, talking French again. I'll be bound he's worth getting on talking ground with. Might learn a heap of things from a man like that. They're worth more than all the books."

A clear-headed and very practical person was the bluff sire of Mr. Kemp Henderson, and there was no danger but that his turn would come to be talked with, and in his own tongue, too.

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CHAPTER V.

BATTLE AND VICTORY.

THE number of men whose exterior arouses anything like an emotion of envy in those who gaze upon them is small indeed. It is not nearly as large as is the mob of those who imagine they are envied. There are too many visible "compensations" for keen-eyed observers to take account of.

In dress, physique, bearing, as well as in the unpresented facts of his bank account and probable inheritance, Kemp Henderson marched up Broadway, that bright October day, an undoubted member of the Enviable Club. More than one pair of the eyes that met him turned to look after him in mute recognition of the visible fact; but it did not do him any manner of good. He did not know it, and he did not care; for he was not thinking of himself. The cloud which had been upon his face in the broker's office, and which even the statement of his gains had failed to dispel, was there yet, and was deepening and darkening.

Up-town, up, up, up, square after square, with a firm, elastic tread and head erect, but with a strangely hungry, searching, questioning look in his dark, earnest eyes.

There were great streams of other human beings, on either sidewalk, who were going up, like Kemp, and there were equally flush and steady currents of

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those who were going down. Such is life, on any of its thoroughfares. In either stream there were many particles fitted to arrest the eye of one familiar with the surface indications which mark the ebb tides of humanity—drops of life that, whichever way they floated, were manifestly sinking.

One of these, some squares above the point yet reached by Kemp, was a woman, in the very prime and pride of young womanhood and decidedly good-looking. Much more so, for a woman, than Kemp was for a man, since her beauty expressed itself in spite of a noteworthy absence of elegance or ornament in her habiliments. Her hair, her eyes, complexion, features, were all refined and feminine and beautified counterparts of his; but no dress-making artist had done for her what the most extravagant of city tailors had done or tried to do for him. Her garments were not faded, indeed, and bore no indication of untidiness. There was even a painfully manifest effort at appearing well; an effort which told, somewhat sadly, that she would have preferred being better dressed for a promenade on Broadway. They were well enough, the garments, and their wearer seemed in vigorous health. She was alone, and in no apparent haste; but fitful flushes of color and pallor followed one another with strange rapidity across her handsome face.

Could there have been some unseen devil, walking at her side, saying such things, unheard by other human ears, as might warrant burning blushes?

Could there have been some answering angel also

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near, unknown even to her, suggesting responses whose expression made her pale?

If so, if any such combat was progressing, within her or around her, the adversary must have had weapons of bitter power at his disposal; for flashes of fierce, despairing light came from her fine brown eyes, at intervals, and spasms of hopeless pain quivered in the corners of her well-shaped mouth. The presence of pain implies that of life, and there is hope as long as it continues.

Not uncommonly, one can escape from a devil by walking fast, and now the woman's feet moved onward more and more rapidly. If they should but move in the right path they would surely carry her to meet some other "messenger." Still, the only words which fell from her lips sounded too much like an answer, indistinct and wavering.

"I cannot let him die! I cannot let them starve before my eyes!"

Those were dangerous words to answer a devil with. There is always a danger and a devil close at hand, when we assume that the question of another's life and death is given to our decision. It is a world where all must die—the thing we call death; and a large part of its population starves, also—the thing we call starvation—but the worst deaths of all are among those we call still living, and the saddest cases of starvation are to be found in the palaces rather than in the hovels. Dangerous words for the woman to utter, and when she said them once again, almost aloud, they were followed by a wonderfully hot and brilliant access of color.

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The better voice must also have made itself heard or felt; for her feet were moving too quickly for any Satan in human form to gaze too long upon her face. If she should not turn to the right hand or the left, she would surely meet that messenger who is invariably, inevitably coming.

On, on, and now her feverish eyes, straining distantly among the crowd beyond, fell upon something which brought into them a sudden look of unmistakable terror. Her lips parted, and a tremor shook her from head to foot.

"My brother? Kemp! So near, too! He may not see me. I—I might run. No, he will go by—"

Her husky whisper was faint with pain and fear, and she turned to the brilliant shop-window at her right, in a vain pretence of studying its gilded attractions. She stood stock-still, and her unseen enemy must have waited at her side, for her face was ashen white. Her artless effort had been made a little too late. Kemp had seen her, and in a moment more his hand was on her arm.

"Maggie? Thank God!"

"How dare you touch me, sir? Who are you?"

The face she turned upon him was flushing redly enough now; but not, as was his, with any expression of triumph and success. If any passer-by had heard her question, however, one glance from face to face would have answered it for him.

"Maggie!" said Kemp, "three years have not changed me as much as that. Come, we must not stand here. Let us walk along."

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"I will not go with you. Not a step."

"Shall I call a carriage? I will not leave you for a moment, now I have found you."

"Found me? Did you ever look for me? Or did my father? Or did that woman?"

"Maggie—"

"Don't you speak to me, Kemp Henderson! I am a disgrace to you. It was my own father said that. He said it after her!"

The words came hoarsely and fiercely through her writhing lips; but even while she uttered them the exquisitely well-dressed youth in whose face she breathed her burden of womanly resentment and wounded pride took her ungloved hand in his, drew it through his arm, and compelled her to keep step with him as he walked on, up Broadway.

"Let me go! You shall not! You all cast me off!"

"Did we? Did I, Maggie? Does this look like it? Are you not my own sister, Margaret?"

"O Kemp! Kemp! But then I look so. To be seen walking with you. I can't. I won't. Let me go!"

Her tone was low, and she controlled her manner sufficiently; but she was every moment yielding more and more to the imperiously loving will that strode beside her.

"I must go with you, then."

"Out of Broadway, Kemp. The next street. It's only three blocks to my— Oh, Kemp, I feel as if I should faint!"

She did not at once tell him the reason; but

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it is a fact well known that symptoms of syncope are frequently exhibited by those who permit themselves to go a length of time without proper nourishment. Especially if the strength so depleted is suddenly called upon to sustain an unusual trial.

"Don't faint, Maggie. Come right in here, and sit down."

"In there? With you? Among all those elegant people? Kemp! Oh, it is dreadful! Did you really search for me?"

Her wounded spirit, festering with old hurts and sore with new ones, was receiving fresh stabs every moment. The difference between her brother's exterior and her own was indeed too marked to escape notice, as he all but dragged her through the portal and in among the glittering tables of that splendid Broadway restaurant. Even pride has its uses at times, and her own came to her help at that moment; for it made her straighten up with a last effort, and hold her dizzy head erect as her brother led her forward, and placed her in a chair by one of the tables. He did it with all but ceremonious politeness, as if he, too, had noticed something which needed to be met.

"Drop the talk, Maggie," he whispered. "We'll have it all out, by and by. You'll feel better if you eat something. Oysters, and a cup of coffee, and a spoonful of wine. Waiter!"

The order was given before she could say a word, and Kemp had no means of knowing with what desperate resolution his sister was withholding the

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storm of hysterical sobs which was pressing behind the white smile on her lips.

"Sip the sherry, Maggie, and eat a few of those small crackers with it. Don't faint, for anything."

"I won't! But my meeting with you is wonderful."

She could look him straight in the face, now she was sitting opposite to him, and she could read enough there to answer some of her inner questionings without the need of speaking them. It was exquisitely soothing to see how anxious he was about her, and what a self-willed, manly way he had of showing his brotherly solicitude. Moreover, the crackers and the wine were just the thing for her, and in a moment more the oysters came.

"I'm ashamed to eat so fast, Kemp; but I'm in a hurry."

"To get home? Never mind. Eat, and then I'll go right along with you."

"You shall not!"

"I will. Now I have found you, you shall not get away from me."

"Oh, but I cannot!"

"Nonsense. Eat your oysters. I'll order you a bowl of turtle soup. It will be here by the time you finish them."

"Kemp—"

Could he have guessed the truth? The suspicion of it brought the color to her cheeks again; but she said no more.

"There, you are better, already. The coffee

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will come with the soup. Waiter! Ah, here it is. No, no soup for me, only a cup of coffee."

"Were you going anywhere, Kemp?"

"Not for hours, yet. Plenty of time to attend to you. Do you really think I've changed in these long three years?"

"From a boy into a man!"

"That's it, I guess. Men can understand some things a great deal better than boys can. Bear that in mind, please, Maggie."

Apparently it was not an unpleasant thing to bear in mind; but, after a silent moment, she said:

"And I, Kemp? Am I changed so very much?"

"Yes, and no. You were twenty-two then, and you do not look more than twenty-five now. That is, now you've got your color back."

"I ought to look older, considering all I've been through."

"Well, I'm glad you've got through."

"Have I? It is little you know of that. Oh, Kemp! Must I tell you? How can I?"

"Tell me everything. Come, now, am I not your brother?"

At that moment he was called upon by the laws of society to send a bow of quick and courteous recognition among the stylish membership of a group at another table, not many paces distant.

Ladies and gentlemen, three of each, and Kemp Henderson had just become aware that the former were looking at him. They were acquaintances of

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his, city unexceptionables, whom he had met at Saratoga, the past summer, and who knew enough about him, his position, and his prospects, to have willingly met him again. He could not have had a doubt of that ; but he had not seen the quick glances exchanged among the three gentlemen, or the suppressed " Is it possible ?" which flitted from lip to lip of the ladies.

What he did see was the stony stare and the unbending heads by which his ready salutation was met.

The cut direct !

His sister was facing the wrong way to see anything but the flash of surprise and indignation on Kemp's face.

The devil had been at some distance from her, for a while ; but he must have now been near enough to whisper, for the next thought in her heart was :

" I understand. Somebody has insulted him on my account."

That particular devil was badly defeated, then and there, however ; for in the tenth part of a second the steady eyes of Kemp Henderson were sending a level gaze of utter strangerhood and indifference from one to another of the three at that table who were facing him, and there was the most deferential of smiles upon his firm lips, shortly afterward, as he arose and said :

" Now, Margaret, my dear, if you will take my arm. Waiter, check ! There. Keep the change."

Not for anything earthly would Margaret have

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otherwise than stepped firmly and proudly as she followed the quick instinct which bade her "stand by her brother."

She did not know, at that moment, how completely Kemp had "conquered" her confidence in him, or how strongly the tide of old sisterly feeling was pouring back through all the channels of her being. Nothing will start a fuller flood than melting ice.

Plainly, almost poorly clad, indeed, but proudly, gracefully, she swept out of the restaurant, leaning on her brother's arm, and one of the ladies at the other table remarked :

"Disgraceful !"

Another said :

"It seems unaccountable."

And the third :

"So young he is, too !"

But one of the gentlemen added :

"She is strikingly handsome."

And the second said :

"Perfect picture of him. They must have been born twins."

And the third :

"No, she is older. I'd no idea he had a sister. Had you ?"

"His sister, Mr. Appleman ? Do you mean that woman was Mr. Henderson's sister ?"

"Certainly, Miss Hazard. My back was toward them ; but I saw them when they went out. I knew he was in town. Met him in the park yesterday, riding with Carlton Forsythe and Lord

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Bulleshue. Henderson is a dreadfully exclusive sort of fellow."

There was a frosty look of discomfort blowing across from face to face of those three ladies; but one of them slipped from under it with the question:

"Are we to have Lord Bulleshue for one of our stars, this season?"

"No, indeed. Forsythe told me they were going up to Daynton—that's Henderson's place, you know—for a spree, and then off north for a hunting tour. Wish I could get at Henderson, and see if there was a chance to cut in."

"Cut in? Why, we cut him dead, all three of us."

It was the youngest and least worldly-wise of the three ladies who said that, and the gentleman to whom she said it drew a long whistle of uncontrollable vexation.

"By George! Never could explain it in all the world. Hope he won't tell Forsythe. By George!"

Kemp Henderson did not have to run the gauntlet of Broadway any further. It was odd indeed that people of "that set" should have been so far down-town on foot at that hour of the day; but the unaccountable is the very thing which happens, at times. A block further up, and Margaret's hand trembled a little, as she drew him to the right.

"It isn't far now, Kemp. I must tell you—we— I—"

"Not now, Maggie. Wait till we get there. Am I to see your husband?"

"Yes, and my children!"

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"Children? How many? I'm glad of that. So I'm an uncle!"

"Only two. Oh, Kemp, do hurry. Seems to me I'm wild to get to them."

"What, are they sick?"

Her breath was coming in agonized gasps, and her one hand griped his arm like a vise, while her other pressed hard upon her heart.

"Kemp, they've eaten nothing to-day. Not a mouthful. Neither has he. I was going mad. I came out to get them something, somehow. I had prayed; but it seemed no use. I had so often—before—"

"Stop! There's a grocery store on the corner. Come on!"

Other words, disjointed, sharp, incoherent, dropped from his lips in the next few seconds; but, whatever they were, they could safely be trusted to the pen of the recording angel.

"I want that basket—"

"Twenty-five cents, sir."

"All right. Maggie, if I forget anything, you remember it for me. Sharp now, you fellow there—I'm in an awful hurry."

"Hurry, sir? Yes-sir. What-is-it-sir?"

"Roll of butter—package ground coffee—pound of tea—two loaves bread—box crackers—ham—can condensed milk—barrel of flour—demijohn of molasses—kit of mackerel—half a ton of coal—got 'em all down?"

"Down sir? Yes-sir. Guess-so. Anything else, sir?"

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"Give me a lift, Maggie. I can't just remember. It's a good while since I've done any marketing."

There is ever something of practical wisdom in motherhood; for Margaret had been putting into her basket with her own hands a number of the minor items, of a kind admitting immediate use. She could hardly wait, however, for the list of Kemp's purchases to be increased, made out, and the money therefor paid over.

"Can you send them right away?" she asked, with a hungry look on her eager face.

"Send 'em?" said Kemp. "What, the basket? No, indeed. They may send the rest; but I'm going to carry this myself. Go ahead, now, Maggie. We can't wait for any provision boy."

"You, Kemp? You carry a market-basket through the streets of New York? I'll carry it myself. It isn't far—"

"Right through Fifth Avenue if it's necessary, only you must stop crying, or you won't see the way. It isn't much of a ham; but we can send out for another after they've eaten that."

Kemp's notions of the ham-eating capacity of two babies, the oldest under three years, were unphysiological; but the basket was on his arm, now, and he was striding out of the "grocery." There was no telling how much good had been done him by the "cut direct," which was even now working upon so very like a spur. The tears were running down the handsome face of his sister, truly; but they were not tears of wounded pride, not any bad kind of weeping at all, and she was conscious

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of a powerful inclination to put her arms around her brother's neck and kiss him.

"Is this the house? It's big enough. Kind of hive, I should say. Go ahead, Maggie."

It was not the kind of hive into which elegantly dressed gentlemen are in the habit of rushing with heavy market-baskets on their arms, and there were signs of a swarm of "bees" pouring out to see that thing done; but Margaret's feet were swift upon the steep, shadowy stairways, and Kemp all but trod upon her heels in following.

Higher, higher—back, now, to the last pair of small, low rooms of the great, gaunt tenement-house, and then Margaret paused for breath and to wipe her eyes, in front of the door.

"Kemp!"

"What is it now, Maggie?"

"This is dreadful!"

"I know. You think I forgot about a fire. I didn't. I put a bundle of kindling and some loose coal in the bottom of the basket. We can blaze right up."

"Not that. But I cannot let you see him as he is. He would not wish it, either."

"Is he right in here?"

"In the back-room, in bed."

"Sick, is he?"

"Not now. He is convalescent. It is such a long story. I cannot bear to have you even see the children, now."

"Just don't then. I'll go and come again. But you must not spare any outlay. I've a good deal

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of money, nowadays—all my own. I won't show my face till to-morrow forenoon. You can spend every cent of this before that, if you want to. Kiss the babies for Uncle Kemp."

Down the stairs he darted, as he dropped into her hand something he had been fumbling for in his breast-pocket, and it was not till he reached the street that he muttered :

"Uncle Kemp, now. How that did sound! See here, young man, what's got into you? No, you really must not sit down on the curbstone and blubber, and you must keep your appointment with Forsythe and Bulleshue, and you must make up your mind how you'll explain to them that you can't go on with them to Daynton to-morrow."

The sound of her brother's departing feet on the bare wood of the stairs had reached the ears of Margaret in a sort of confused jumble with his last words. Her fingers closed mechanically upon that which he had placed within them, and her other hand was upon the knob of that door, and all her heart was within it. But for all that it seemed to require a tremendous effort on her part to turn the knob, and to cross the cheerless threshold into the close-smelling, uncarpeted, comfortless room.

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CHAPTER VI.

KEMP HENDERSON'S LETTER.

AUNT MAUD HENDERSON stood in the doorway of the old Henderson farmhouse, with an expression upon her dignified face which was thoughtful to the verge of uneasiness.

"Too long, altogether," she said, aloud and decidedly. "I know her mother wouldn't like it. She's too old for me to interfere, and she isn't any child of mine, and I can't help liking of her; but she ought to have made Link Bishop bring her back home before this. You don't say! No, it just can't be them. His was a two-horse team. Blacks, too, and that there's a sorrel. Now I do declare! Has Link been, and let himself get run away with?"

That was the first question she asked him, half a minute later, as she stood behind the gate to see him help Nelly Davenport out of that ancient and unhandsome buggy. It was Nell herself who replied:

"No, Aunt Maud, they did not run away. All they did was to kick the other buggy to pieces, after we got out."

"Why, child! And you've had as nigh an escape as that!"

"Now, Miss Henderson," said Link, with a twinkle in his eye. "Haven't I brought her back

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safe and sound? Did I make any promise to you about my buggy?"

"It's a dreadful thing—"

"And it isn't every day a young lady gets a chance to see a new buggy kicked into kindling wood."

"You're just like your father. I've heard say he'd laugh if he'd upset a whole stageful, if there wasn't anybody much hurt."

"I've had a splendid ride, Aunt Maud, and I'd been cooped up in the house so long."

"I must hurry back, Nelly," exclaimed Link, springing to his seat again. "Good afternoon."

He sent a very polite good-day to Aunt Maud also; but he was plainly in something like haste to get out of speaking distance. It was quite likely he had said to Nelly all he cared to say, before they reached the gate. She, for her part, had no objection whatever to giving an account of her adventure, and Link's management of his rebellious span lost nothing in her description of it. Neither did Miss Henderson's impression of the peril incurred diminish at all as she listened, and she wound up a series of exclamatory interjections with:

"Dear me! What would your mother say? She'd blame me, I know."

"What for? Now, Aunt Maud, I didn't mean that. If you really thought I ought not to go with anybody I'd let you tell me so. Don't feel bad about it."

With all her years and her dignity, Aunt Maud was quite willing to be caressed a little by such a

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bright young person as Nelly Davenport was when she returned from her ride, and the latter was speedily able to escape in good style to her own room.

"Kemp's letter! There it is, on the table. I'd almost forgotten about it."

It was picked up now, however, even before she changed her dress, and it was read from end to end, with a manner which grew more and more grave and thoughtful with every line her eyes ran across.

Kemp had evidently written to his aunt somewhat freely and fully concerning his doings and plans, past, and present, and future; for Nelly once or twice almost put down the letter, and at last she said:

"I wonder if Aunt Maud ought to have shown it to me. I'm not half sure he'd have liked it. There's a great deal in that letter."

Indeed there was—more than Kemp Henderson had any idea he had written. More than was there in black and white, or that any other pair of eyes in the wide world might have been able to read. That was the thought in Nelly's mind when she put it down, and she did not dream of any such thing being in Aunt Maud Henderson's thoughts at that very minute.

"Nelly is keen; but will she see it? She does not like Kemp, nor he her. She may think it's that that's kept him from coming home sooner. I know better. What will be the end of it all? I do so want to see him!"

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The passage in Kemp's letter of which his aunt was thinking was precisely the one which Nell did not understand. It contained these words among others :

" I've been here for weeks. I have left no stone unturned, but thus far I have failed. I won't say more now ; but I've about made up my own mind.

" You need not be at all surprised if I decide on getting away soon, after they come home. All my idols are getting broken, one after another."

It must have sounded falsely sentimental to the inner hearing of Nell Davenport ; for the color came and went in her face as she scornfully exclaimed :

" Idols ! What does he mean by that ? His own mother ? Aunt Maud may think so ; but I know better. His idols ! He'll never break one. They have to get away from him. Was his only sister ever one of his idols, I'd like to know ? That whole thing was a burning disgrace and shame to us all. No, not to me. I had no hand in it. Her fault, too ? Of course it was. But then—her only brother ! Why can't Kemp Henderson be a man ? He has body enough, and brains, too, they say."

The letter was thrown half way across the table, and then picked up again for a re-perusal, and this was interrupted here and there by brown studies and bursts of seemingly unaccountable indignation. Some part of her wrath continued to fall upon the unconscious head of her absent step-brother ; but there were others who came in for a share.

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That was indeed an important letter, for one so seemingly commonplace. There were subjects for thought in the facts of Nelly's own position, and Kemp said, somehow, just enough to force them to the surface for immediate consideration. He unintentionally compelled her to remember, and to look forward. Her mother's social ambitions had very nearly exhausted the "Davenport estate," what there was of it, before she gained the prize of a second husband, a rich one, in Mr. Henderson. The mother's success was not necessarily the daughter's, and Nelly was therefore poor. Not an heiress of anything whatever. She had cared little about it, at the first; but, as the years had gone by, the fact had slowly grown upon her. The past few months at the old farmhouse had been pleasant enough, with good Aunt Maud all the while growing more and more into a "blood relation;" but there were changes to come, and Kemp had spoken of them.

"It is an even chance," he had written, near the end, "whether I go to Europe for a while, or take the old farm with you, and run it."

"Kemp a farmer!" exclaimed Nell, contemptuously. "Giving Greek and Latin names to his cows! He is much more likely to cross the ocean. I think I know who will have something to say about that. If he has any idea she cares about him he has a bitter lesson to learn. One more of his idols to mourn over."

She did not speak as if she were preparing to lavish any sisterly sympathy upon him, although

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her face grew suddenly sober, and she cut off her impetuous soliloquy.

The one fact remained, after all, that he was coming home, and so were his father and her mother, and there they would all be together in a somewhat contracted family prison, until Mr. Henderson's new house in Daynton should be completed.

There had been family storms of a disastrous result already in that homestead, and the weather, so to speak of it, had a somewhat threatening aspect. On Nell's face it grew more and more cloudy, and her brown studies ran into one another like spatters of rain on the panes of a window, till they seemed to gather in swollen drops at her eyes, and came dropping down her cheeks. It is no compliment to any people, young or old, that the prospect of their speedy return from their travels takes all the high spirits out of a young woman who is to meet them, and sets her to weeping as if her heart would break.

It was a serious matter. Such young women as Nell Davenport do not remain long in houses where they are not particularly wanted. Margaret Henderson had endured less than a year of her father's second household. But then she had been a grown-up woman, and the coming of her new mother had a good deal more than superseded her as mistress of the situation.

Nell had been a girl then ; but she had now ceased to be one, and one of the evidences of it was her strong and growing sympathy with her banished step-sister, and her fierce resentment of what she

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deemed the heartless worldliness of those who had cast her off.

On the whole, therefore, Kemp's letter to his aunt was a sort of mischief-maker instead of a mere herald of his return. Perhaps it was less so, however, than was another missive, signed by his own father, and which arrived at the bank by that day's afternoon mail. Mr. Raynor spoke of its coming, afterward, to his wife and daughter; but he did not show it to them or to his grizzled, old, confidential head book-keeper at the bank.

In his elegantly furnished private office, away in the rear, behind all the rest of the financial management, just after banking hours, he drew that envelope from his pocket, opened it, read it carefully more than once, and then stared long and earnestly at a dead fly on the opposite wall.

"He is the deepest man I ever knew," he muttered. "I never saw, till this moment, why he was willing to take so long a vacation. It has given me a chance, though, and that was all I wanted. There will be no need for Henderson to disclaim all knowledge of or connection with my operations. It's all right now. Old Gerry's balance-sheet will be a clean one when Henderson sees it. I'll telegraph to Bounce & Co. to close out every share, and I'll draw for the proceeds. What a magnificent thing this big rise in stocks has been for me!"

Magnificent for a great many people, including Kemp Henderson; but not quite so much so for a great many others.

Mr. Latimer Raynor seemed inclined to hug him-

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self over his discovery of an additional depth in his absent associate ; but the look on his face when he spoke of him had hardly been one of expectant affection. Still, it is not easy to read such faces as that of Mr. Raynor. He may have felt the warmest friendship, and failed to express it in his half-frozen smile, and his face was very pale at the moment.

Out there in the main office the clerks were busy over their books, while Mr. Raynor was studying his letter, and making his discovery, and penning his private telegram to Bounce & Co., the great Wall Street brokers. Money in various forms and amounts was coming in and going out over the teller's counter. Up there in the corner by the window old Mr. Gerry was dotting figures on slips of paper, and transferring them to loose sheets or to the red-ruled pages of vast folios, just as he had been doing, year after year, since almost anybody could remember. He had stood there, dotting figures, on the day Mr. Raynor became president of the bank, and long after that, when Mr. Henderson came in as cashier ; and he had only dotted a little faster and more nervously on the day when the institution ceased to be "state" in its constitutional character, and took on new dignity and wider circulating power as "national."

Right there, if nothing should happen to him, he was likely to stand when the last day should come.

The last day ?

To the bank, not to the world. The final judgment of human souls, or any one of them, is not an affair of this lower world or of time ; but there is a

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sure "last day" that comes on earth to all banking houses and other financial institutions.

They are born, they grow up, they mature; some few of them even grow old; fewer still attain great age indeed, living on, like some human beings, until their antiquity is about their only title to respect; but they all at last die, and rot—or rot, and die—and disappear.

Alas, that in so many cases both death and putrefaction should be feloniously concealed for so long a time after the proper date of the public funeral.

Law is law, and so if old Mr. Gerry should live long enough he would surely see the doors of the First National Bank of Daynton closed at and after ten o'clock A.M. His cheerful expression of face on the present occasion was good evidence that he was not dwelling mentally upon any such dire hereafter. In fact, the great institutions of the "city" and even the Treasury officials considered that they had few healthier or stronger concerns upon their long lists of country correspondents. Old, well managed, owned by men of wealth and high social standing, that bank had been a great backing up for Kemp Henderson during his summer wanderings. There had been uttered, in more than one instance, where his name came up in the company of portly, old gentlemen, almost this formula:

"Fine young man, sir. Unexceptionable. He is the only son of the First National Bank of Daynton."

There is nothing like a spotless ancestry and plenty of it.

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CHAPTER VII.

AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

THERE is something peculiarly fascinating in the second evening out of port, on board an ocean steamer. That is, if the weather is fine. Such of her passengers as may yet be happily untouched by the malicious hand of the sickness of the sea are sure to find themselves exploring all accessible nooks and corners of the decks and cabins for available spots in which to enjoy the fascination.

If the ship be not crowded, so much the better for the chances of stumbling unexpectedly into new acquaintanceships and desirable propinquities.

Mr. Henderson had succeeded even better than his wife in some of his own stumbling. Only a little after dinner he had been able to say to her :

" My dear, I have had quite a talk with our military friend. His name is Morrow—"

" Morrow ? Morrow ? Seems to me I've heard that name somewhere."

" Can't get him to say much about himself ; but he knows a little of everything and a good deal of some things. Remarkable man !"

" Be careful, Mr. Henderson."

" Don't you be afraid. I know men. I like him all the better for being a little reserved."

" Is he so very interesting ?"

" Just what he looks. I spoke to him about

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India. Guess I was right. Gave me piles of fresh information about affairs there. Must have had something to do with the government. Knows the viceroy and all the native big guns. Queer names he gave some of them. You must have a talk with him."

The *Hermetic* was what is called "a comfortable boat" as well as a safe one; but she did roll a little, and everybody knows what that sort of thing will do, occasionally, for a man of Mr. Henderson's robust and energetic organism.

"My darling—"

"You are looking a little pale, Mr. Henderson!"

"It's nothing at all, pet. Mr. Morrow is coming this way—"

The *Hermetic* was rising grandly and gracefully over a long roll of the Atlantic as the gentleman from India, with steady, unwavering step, marched down the cabin toward the spot where the banker was standing by his wife, and the latter did not feel the same effect from the upward lift of the buoyant mass beneath her as did her husband She was all but staring at the stranger.

"I will introduce you, my dear—"

He did his duty manfully; but hardly had he placed his captive curiosity in communication with Mrs. Henderson, before the deep tones he had rallied for the emergency began to falter, and in a moment more she had her new acquaintance all to herself.

Her husband had remarked, in going:

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"If I lie down awhile this thing will pass off. I was hardly sick a day on the way out."

"So sorry! Shall I come?"

"By no means, my dear. Stay out here, and enjoy yourself as long as you can."

Then he had vanished, and she could resume her smile, and go on with her conversation.

Very interesting she found it, too; quite as much so as she could reasonably have expected; but it soon began to dawn upon her that she was a mere tyro, conversationally, in the hands of a rare master of the noble art. He replied to her every question so perfectly, so fully, and yet with so deft a refusal to utter anything which increased her scanty stock of information concerning himself. She was studying, actually, in what form to put a direct question relating to his military rank and service, contrary to all the known social laws regulating chance acquaintanceships and conversations at sea, when she discovered that the talk had drifted across the ocean, right through the custom-house, over or under the city of New York, up the Hudson, and that it was now hovering among the ways of life of American families of high standing in the rural districts.

"It is remarkable," she said to herself. "I spoke of tiger hunting, only a moment ago."

She said aloud:

"I am sure you will like our country. Have you ever been there?"

"O yes. Long ago. Things must have changed wonderfully since then."

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"They have changed a great deal, even since I can remember."

That could not have been very long; but the old gentleman carelessly neglected to say so. Partly, perhaps, because he was intent upon extracting from her sundry details of those changes. It so happened, however, that Mrs. Henderson had not left herself without acquaintances among the passengers, and before she could drag her remarks away from their entanglement with American mutabilities there was another lady, and then another, and then a pair of gentlemen, added to the conversation. It is the way things will happen at sea, especially in the anxious hours before people know whether or not they are going to escape seasickness, and half believe they can keep it away by talking hard about everything else in the world.

They all had more to say than had Mr. Morrow; but he helped them say it, most skilfully, and all the while Mrs. Henderson felt herself glancing more and more frequently at the clear-cut, aristocratic outlines of his sunburned, resolute, benevolent face.

There were such deep lines upon it, and they seemed to indicate so very much. It was a face with a history, there could be no doubt of that; but from what in that history, however eventful, could it have drawn the weird power which it seemed to have, even when the deep-set eyes were not looking upon her?

"I hardly like to have him look at me," she thought. "It seems as if he were seeing right

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through me. He has made me remember, already, a world of things I had forgotten. Dear me, how much he did make me tell him, too."

There was no question about one thing more, however. Mr. Morrow, whoever he might be, was the one person of highest rank in that group. So much so that he was himself unthoughtful of it, and all the rest took it for granted.

"He must have been a general, at least," thought Mrs. Henderson. "I've heard they often insist on laying by their titles, and mixing with the world as civilians."

And then the tremendous thought came to her that her wonderful acquaintance might be a nobleman of high rank, travelling *incognito*.

She was herself no ordinary woman, considering her advantages and disadvantages, and she had felt deliciously the pleasure of the compliment she had paid herself, when she discovered how well she could hold her own with this white-mustached mystery of the ocean. She caught herself wondering, too, if she had done the thing as well as it could have been done by this, or that, or the other of the magnates of her home "society."

"I don't believe Mrs. Latimer Raynor herself could have done it any better," was the form in which the cashier's brilliant wife expressed her belief that the queen of Daynton could not have carried on that conversation nearly as well. She was a little apt to add Mrs. Raynor, in imagination, to any group or circle she might fall in with; for

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we do not always leave behind us our local fetters when we go to Europe or its equivalent.

It was not so very strange, therefore, that, before Mrs. Henderson's sense of duty compelled her to go to her state-room and ascertain the further effects upon her husband of the rolling of the *Hermetic*, she had actually spoken of Mrs. Raynor, and of other Daynton people, with the reserved and dignified Mr. Morrow. It was a piece of weakness for which she chided herself, after she left him, still the centre of a busily talking group; but it had not been so unfair, after all, since not only Mrs. Raynor but others of the Daynton people were at that hour talking of her.

Aunt Maud and Nelly were, almost as a matter of course. Old Mr. Gerry's wife had received the news of her speedy return with a prolonged series of-comparisons between her and the first Mrs. Henderson, and all of these would have been interesting, if not profitable hearing for the second.

Link Bishop had remarked to his black team, when he turned away from their stall, after a last careful inspection of their somewhat damaged appliances for straight kicking:

"I dunno if it's worth while for me to sell you right off, after all. I can work all the nonsense out of you, and, if the old woman's coming home, there won't be any more show for you to run away with Nell Davenport. I'd try it on, though, any day, to see the grit come out on her face like it did to-day."

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And then, queerest thing to happen or to hear of, Link threw an apt quotation from some old "play" at the heads of those horses, and left them.

"I'll take a turn at that, to-night," he said to himself. "I won't have Kemp Henderson and the rest getting too far ahead of me. Only it beats me what's the use of it."

Little enough, perhaps, in the training of horses, the management of a farm, or in any part of that which commonly passes for success in life. Nevertheless, the evenings a man of Link Bishop's mould may spend with the old-time thinkers are safe not to be lost time. They are all dead, truly, those queer, by-gone generations, the thinkers and writers as well as the mob; but there is a wonderful deal of life in some of the relics they have left behind them.

Link was by no means alone in one other of his conclusions. If he was disposed to regard the return of "the old woman" as something other than an unmixed blessing to him and his fast team, so, with reference to other matters, was Mrs. Latimer Raynor, much as she might have scorned to think the same thought with such a fellow as Link. She said it, in several different forms, to her daughter Katherine, both before Mr. Raynor's final return from the bank and afterward, and each time it was met with a response of more or less cordial and daughterly agreement, and each time the name of Mr. Kemp Henderson seemed to stumble in over the sound of that of his returning step-mother. He had inherited the so-called "Henderson farm" from

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his own mother; but it looked as if a larger inheritance were now coming to him by way of Nell Davenport's too successful mamma.

Mr. Raynor's evening was spent, as was not uncommon, with his books and papers, in his library, and the mother and daughter had the cosey sitting-room of the high-caste old mansion all to themselves.

"I think we have been foolishly free with the 'Endersons, 'eretofore, Katherine. It makes the proper management of Lord Bulleshoe's visit more difficult."

"I think not, mother. Nelly is out at the farm, and need not come in unless we have a party. Mr. and Mrs. Henderson will get here only a few days before his lordship goes away, if they do even that. As for Kemp—"

"What about Kemp?"

"I don't know. I was thinking, just then—"

"What, dear?"

"What a queer name Bulleshoe is for a nobleman."

"So it is, indeed, and I'm not at all sure about it. Think of the Chumleys spelling their name Cholmondeley, and so on. Old names, my dear. Nobody really knows where they came from."

"I'll tell you what, mother, you and I had better wait till we hear Mr. Forsythe pronounce it."

"It is so kind of Mr. Forsythe to bring him here."

They were looking straight into each other's eyes

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at that moment, and the thought in Mrs. Raynor's mind was :

" If Forsythe or Lord Bulleshoe could but see her now !"

For the rich flood of color called up in the cheeks of Katherine by other thoughts which were flashing back and forth between her and her mother made her beauty shine out at its very best, and she really did look captivatingly lovely.

" Ah, my dear, if we women were but mistresses of ourselves."

" What can you mean, mother ?"

" So we could determine just 'ow well we would look at any precise moment, and not waste ourselves when there was no need of it."

" Most women try."

" I think some learn 'ow, only not to perfection. You are wasting a great deal just now."

" On you, mother ?"

Mrs. Raynor did but laugh, a hearty, cheerful, well-conditioned laugh, full of the fat serenity of her social wisdom. There is really no heartlessness in that kind of motherly merriment, since it is full of all the heart belonging to the one who utters it, and Mrs. Raynor was devoted to her only daughter. There was little indeed she would not have gladly sacrificed to have seen Katherine satisfactorily " settled in life." Little else that she would not readily have done or attempted to prevent anything like an unsatisfactory settlement. Katherine knew it all well, and she loved her mother accordingly. Such perfect mutual under-

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standings are very sweet to look upon. And yet it is possible Mrs. Raynor's comprehension of her daughter was not absolute. That is, she may not have been made minutely acquainted with either the past or the present, and she might have gathered information concerning both if she had been in Katherine's own room a good two hours later. It was after even the well people on board the *Hermetic* were safely in their berths, for the greater part, and Katherine ought, perhaps, to have been in hers ; but there she sat at the centre-table with the contents of her writing-desk tumbled out before her.

"Too much of this rubbish. If there isn't that ring ! No, I must keep all of those things. Poor fellow ! What a silly girl I was, too ; but then I did enjoy it so, and some of his letters are capital. Glad I never gave him my photograph. One, two, three, four of his. He doesn't look so much like a boy in that last one."

She did not take the pains to read the letters over, although she had untied the little packet that contained them ; but she looked very sweetly and kindly from one to another of those four miniatures. One was in the uniform of the local militia regiment, and the young warrior was plainly cultivating his first mustache.

"He looks better in this last, though. What should I say to him if he should ever speak to me about it again ? I can prevent that, I think. I must. No, he never will ; but I must keep them all."

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Her eyes closed for a moment, as if she were taking a sort of dreamy pleasure in living over some triumph of other days, and there was a maliciously lovely smile upon her lips. Then she tied her trophies up again, young soldier and all, and tumbled them back into the writing-desk with the other rubbish. Her mother would have been quite reassured if she had seen her do that.

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CHAPTER VIII.

FROM GALL TO HONEY.

THE upper back pair of rooms in the tenement-house, to the very door of which Margaret had led her brother, were poor enough ; but they had supplied stage room for something of a scene during her absence.

There was a bed in the inner room, and a child's crib between it and the one window, and in the crib a bright-faced boy. The tear-stains on his rosy cheeks suggested how vigorously he had cried himself to sleep. On the pillow of the bed was the head of a man. A strong, intellectual head, though the hair and beard were in sad disorder, and the face was ghastly pale.

Sleeping? Yes, for a long while ; but consciousness came at last, and the heavily mustached lips parted their yellow jungle, and a deep, sonorous voice filled the room.

"Margaret?"

"Mamma's gone out, papa. She said she would come back with something to eat."

Soft, clear, wonderfully distinct, was the small child-voice from the outer room. Such voices and such clearly cut words do not often fall from the lips of babes not yet three years old.

Slowly and feebly, but not painfully, the man arose in bed, and looked around him.

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"No breakfast. What can she have been doing? Gone? I could almost get up and dress. I know I could if I had a mouthful to eat first. I will try."

Then followed words in the German tongue, and the effort to rise continued. It was plain that he had been long ill; but he must have been a man of courage, for in the course of a few minutes he was at least half clad, and seemed almost able to stand alone. He staggered to the open door of the outer room.

The weather did not call for any fire; but the sole occupant had pulled her bit of a broken-down little rocking-chair in front of the empty grate, and sat there, rocking slowly, with a forlorn, battered doll held tightly to her little bosom. It must have been her own wee hands which had stuffed the grate so full of rubbish, in that fantastic semblance of a fire.

"Lena!"

"O papa, dolly and I are so hungry. And Kaiser, too. He cried for some milk. Then mamma cried, and she went out to get some."

When the wolves of the soul set their teeth hard in the heart of a strong man the pain in his face will sometimes be a terrible thing to look upon. Lena looked in her father's face, for only a second, and then she cowered low in her rocking-chair, hugging her doll as if she were frightened.

There were two large, old trunks in the inner room, and a shabby wardrobe against the dingy wall, and the man staggered to and opened these

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one after another. They were very nearly empty, all three.

"I understand! Margaret, come back! Oh, is it to this I have pulled you down? Fool! Madman! Idiot! You were rich and happy till I crossed your path. The children? Hers? Mine? My God, they are starving!"

The bed was near him at that moment. Near enough for him to have thrown himself upon it, if he had thought; but his failing frame rocked and tottered, for a moment, where he stood, and then he came lumbering down, full length, upon the floor. There is less careful selection in real life than on the stage, by broken-hearted or dying people, of a proper place whereon to fall.

He was lying there when the outer door at last opened; but Lena had not rocked once, after the startled cry that burst from her when she heard the sound of his fall.

"Mamma! mamma!"

The words were almost joyful in their expression of relief and deliverance; but the childish hand was pointing into the bedroom.

"Kaiser?"

"No, papa—"

"Wilhelm!" gasped Margaret, as she sprang forward.

Only a low groan answered her until she clasped the fallen man in her arms, and strove to lift him to the bed.

"I can rise, Maggie. I must! I understand, now—"

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He was making a desperate effort, and with her help he all but regained his feet.

"Not the bed, Maggie. A chair. I will not be sick again. It is all my fault. My foolish, idiotic pride. Why did I not sweep streets, or saw wood? Why did I ever bring this on you?"

"Wilhelm? Don't, dear. Can you sit there, a minute? I must cook some breakfast."

"You have some? They will be fed? Now?"

She was at that moment picking up something she had dropped on the floor in trying to help him. She did but glance at it as she thrust it into her pocket; but her face was very white as she hurried silently away into the other room.

"Dolly is dreadful hungry, mamma."

"Poor darling—"

A match among the rubbish Lena had piled in the grate; more paper; all the kindling wood; and then the bright blaze sprang up, with a hopeful, promising leap, and Lena even turned from the inspection of the treasures in the basket to look at the fire.

People who live in tenement-houses, and are too poor to buy a stove, soon learn how well our ancestors got along before stoves were invented. A big tea-kettle, a small kettle, a frying-pan, a broken gridiron, a coffee-pot, an old fork to toast bread with, and a good cook can do wonders. Margaret's husband was in the enjoyment of eggs on buttered toast in a miraculously short time. Coffee, too, and she would have had broiled ham with it but for a fear that it would do him no good.

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"Mamma?"

The shout was from the crib this time, and it was Lena's voice that answered it:

"Get up, Kaiser. Mamma boiled the milk for you, but I put the crackers in. They're real good."

Dolly had not been dropped for a moment, and she would by this time have been at least three sizes larger if she had eaten all that had been urged upon her. As it was, her somewhat dubious countenance—doubtful both as to form and color—was moist with more than one spoonful of hot milk, and her mouth, in particular, showed marks of buttered cracker. So did that of the youthful Kaiser, before many more minutes had rolled over his curly head.

"This cannot last, Margaret. I have been looking at things. I know all is gone."

"Don't talk, Wilhelm. Eat, and get strong. You won't be sick any more."

"I have been a coward. I'd never have been sick at all, but for that."

Both of them knew what he meant, and how true and how false it was. The kind of manly cowardice which prostrates a husband and father with brain fever is not precisely the kind for which his wife can or ever will despise him, and there was a world of love and sympathy in Margaret's reply. A whole world, but not a word of spoken language. Then she forced him to lie down again, insisting that he must obey her, or he would never regain his strength.

"We shall not starve, dear. We shall be cared for."

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"As heretofore? Have you heard lately from the Providence you used to speak of before I taught you better?"

There was much condensed bitterness in his eyes and voice, as he said that. It is so hard for a raven, or any other bird, to conceive the existence of a "Providence" which does not provide according to its own notion of the needs of young and old ravens.

Margaret was silent again; but there was a peculiar light on her face as she turned away to help Kaiser to another saucer of milk. Then there were the things in the basket to be put away, and then she suddenly exclaimed:

"He ordered a barrel of flour and a half a ton of coal. What could I do with them? I must go, and see about it. There's no room here for anything."

People who live on upper floors back are compelled to economize their room; but the thought of Kemp's order at the grocery was followed by another, and she put her hand into her pocket. She seemed almost afraid to draw it out again.

"Dear me! O dear! Bills? What did he do it for?"

Tens, twenties, fifties — the whole must have added up to several hundreds; but she did not make any accurate count or computation.

"How unjust I have been to him! He always loved me, too, even when he was a little bit of a fellow. Dear Kemp! my own, dear brother!"

She could look around the rooms with different

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eyes, standing there with all that money in her hand. So bare it was!

She could but glance at her own apparel and at the threadbare coat of her husband, which hung rustily on the chair near the bed in the inner room.

"I will have everything back again, the first thing. I am almost afraid to show this to Wilhelm. Not all at once. Not till he has seen Kemp. Seems to me I must tell him!"

She stepped to the door, irresolutely; but the loud, regular breathing from the bed told her that her husband's recent strain of mind and body had brought him a wholesome weariness, and that in turn had gifted him with sleep. No physician in the world could have done better for such a convalescent, a man climbing back to health and strength from the deep valleys of brain fever and the exhaustion of a prolonged low diet.

"He will have plenty to eat now. That is all he needs."

She put her hand once more deep into the pocket of her dress, and brought out a faded portemonnaie. There was no money in it, when she opened it, only a remarkable number of small rectangles of brown and yellow paper.

Pawn tickets, a heap of them, and the very oldest had yet some weeks to run of its prescribed year. Those older ones would all call for ornaments, of one sort and another. Not the more costly items of the adornment of the daughter of a wealthy banker. There had been none of these to pawn at so late a date in Margaret's married life; but here

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was an abundance that would be worth recovering.

"I will go out while he is asleep."

Her visit to the grocery was a brief one, and then she stood, for a full minute, stock-still on the sidewalk, before she could muster courage to enter a forbidding-looking doorway, a few steps further down the block. She had stood in that precise manner, near that spot, more than once before, and always, as now, she had ended by going in. Not there only, moreover, for the patrons of the pawnbrokers do as much shopping around for better bargains as do any other class of careful shoppers.

Her fit of irresolution, however, was repeated before each successive doorway over which the pendent triple balls declared the nature of the business done within. Strange that it should seem as great a humiliation to redeem pledges as to pawn them. They manage these things better in benighted Europe, Great Britain excepted. It is as if the more charitable and evangelical and freedom-loving of nations felt compelled to leave its very poor most utterly unprotected in their poverty. Perhaps it is from a conscientious fear of robbing the pawnbrokers of their time-honored privilege to rob; but the "Monte de Piété" would be an improvement on the three balls and their managers.

The completion of Margaret's several errands required more than one coming, and going, and mounting of the long, steep flights of stairs.

She was in the room when Wilhelm at last awoke, and now he sat up, and talked a little, in a

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vague, bewildered way, as if he had questions on his mind that he could not yet put in shape to ask. Then he took Kaiser in his arms, and played with him a little, and Lena brought her rocker and her doll to the bedside. She had wonderful things to tell them of Dolly and how very much she had eaten, and she was telling them yet when Kaiser went to sleep again. So, in a few moments more, did his father, and as soon as Margaret was sure of it she beckoned Lena into the front room, and went upon another errand.

Such comings and goings could but attract attention in such a hive as that, and there were indications, in the remarks which followed her from time to time, that Margaret had been neither neighborly nor a favorite during the days of her residence. Of them all only one complete utterance actually reached her :

" Hush, thin ! She's bringin' thim all back agin. I saw the gintleman meself, and its a fine man he was. Didn't I tell yez she'd come to it ? They all does. Specially the young and good-lookin' wans, loike her."

" Dade an' she's nothin' wondherful."

Fire, torture, horror ! What was it that had taken in her tingling veins the place of blood ? Her breath came hard and quick.

" Mercy ! I must get away from this ! I shall choke !"

It required desperate courage, after that, to carry a bundle into the tenement-house, and up through the peering gauntlet of its giggling inmates.

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And yet they were but faithful representatives, all of them—the spirit that sends out its bitterest innuendoes upon those of the world's broken ones who begin on some unlooked-for day to redeem their pledges, and bring home their jewels and their better garments.

The case would hardly have been much better for Margaret if Kemp Henderson had been there himself, to help his sister, instead of sitting at his luxurious dinner at the Montmorency, and afterward in his box at the theatre with Carlton Forsythe and Lord Bulleshue. For some reason or other he was able to make himself uncommonly good company, that evening, and was rewarded by emphatic declarations of their regret that they were not to have him with them on the rail next day.

"It's all right, though," said his lordship, heartily. "A fellow can't have everything in this world, and the oysters were undeniable. So was the game. Henderson, my boy, it won't do! I was just saying to myself, 'What a lovely creature!' and she looked at you, and blushed. I'll not have it, indeed!"

"Don't," said Forsythe. "He's young. You bring the maiden color to his cheeks. Where did you meet the Hazards, Kemp?"

"At Saratoga, I believe—"

"Why on earth don't you bow, then? Ah—"

He had made a bad shot for once. The young lady who had been one of the three to give poor Kemp the cut direct that very day, had been so far overcome at thus and so nearly confronting him

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again, in her all but adjacent "reserved chair," that she had permitted herself to look at him and color, and then to utterly fail in catching Carlton Forsythe's own courteous inclination of his handsome head, until it was too late.

She bowed, indeed, a little spasmodically, just as Forsythe's astonished eyes returned to the stage to watch Rip Van Winkle climbing the Dunderberg; but it was too late for him.

Down swept the stately blonde head of Lord Bulleshue.

"My boys, I've beaten you both. It's blind luck. It comes to me now and then. My mother was Irish. She's a sweet creature. That makes twenty-seven; but I shall never see her again. That's my luck, too—on the English side."

Kemp had been watching the upward movement of the immortal Dutchman of Sleepy Hollow, and when the goblin cask was placed upon his shoulders it seemed to suggest, by some weird non-relation, a young man like himself toiling up the steep stairways of a tenement-house with an overladen market-basket on his arm. Only the attendant form was not that of any goblin of the Dunderberg.

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CHAPTER IX.

ANOTHER DRIVE WITH LINK.

LINK BISHOP'S farm was a fairly good one, and his father, the ex-stage-driver, had left it in good condition to Link's mother. She, too, had done well by it and by her only son; and he had known exactly what to do with it during the four years since her death and since it had been all his own. Link was regarded as a good catch, among the many pretty girls of the country-side, and even by some in Daynton, and more than one thoughtful matron had remarked, in riding past the old farmhouse, what changes would be good for it in case its present owner should fall into the hands of a wise and experienced motherly adviser.

He was now twenty-eight, however, and no very important changes had been made, for he had as yet denied himself a mother-in-law. He was of a somewhat thrifty turn of mind, and the house was good enough for a single man. Men like his father builded well, in their day, and their houses were likely to last a long while; but they wasted little in any straining after mere architectural effect. Whatever they might happen to have on hand in the way of spare cash or timber, over and above the strict demands of homestead utility, they were reasonably sure to further develop as barns and stock shelters.

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A good house, with nothing remarkable about it, within or without, except in one room. That was a room into which hardly anybody but Link ever looked, and it had assumed its present characteristics so slowly that no general special attention had been attracted to them—the front room, second story, spreading two thirds of the way across that floor. Low in the ceiling, the western edge of the latter being squeezed down about two feet by the economical slant of the roof. A large room, in floor area, but having a dreadfully confined and cramped look by reason of its contents. Link slept in the box of a bedroom across the entry, and a bed, truly, would not have been comfortably at home here. There were tables, chairs, trunks, all of an old-fashioned and worked-to-death-in-the-service appearance; but the prevailing feature of the place was books. Not that any sound-minded scholar could have glanced around that cluttered inclosure, and conscientiously have remarked: "Library."

It was nothing of the kind. Only the lumber-room of a miscellaneous reading man, with means to buy and without the mental training or purpose to know or care what not to buy.

Link sat in that room to a late hour, the evening after his ride with Nell Davenport, and he himself seemed to be deeply impressed with what he saw around him, as if his customary kerosene student-lamp had suddenly acquired the power to cast a new light upon the heterogeneous result of his years of pickings up.

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"What on earth have I done it for?" he mentally asked himself, and came very near speaking aloud when he promptly responded:

"I'll be hanged if I know. That is, I don't see what made me begin; but I kind o' like it now. It's a good deal like drinking whiskey. Only some of it's more like beer, and there's a pile of ginger-pop over in that corner."

At least two bushels of unassorted poetry and fiction lay dustily still under that contemptuous imputation; but Link's reading must have taught him something.

"Slops," he muttered, with a motion of his foot at another heap. "Theology, most of 'em. Got 'em at auction. Cheap enough, too; but I can't swallow them!"

There was a strong accent on the last word, and yet some of those books were very good reading, for a man who had nothing else to do, and was sure of living a thousand years.

It might be they were hardly a paying investment for a man like Link Bishop; but that was equally true of nine tenths of his other literary lumber. True of any library in the world, in like proportion, and more than true of any book-store. That is, if the time and brains of human beings are really worth anything.

"I've read, and I've read, and I've read, and I'm going to do so some more, to-night; but what's the good of it?"

His love for horses and the care of his farm had served him as an antidote, so that his mind was still

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reasonably healthy ; but what of the years that were to come ?

He must have been asking himself that question, for he spread a volume of standard novels on the table before him with the remark :

" Wife ? Jeminy ! What a clearing out any woman would make of this concern ! I'd let her, too, I would."

He read late ; but he was up early in the morning, nevertheless. Not only was it a constitutional thing with him, but he had work before him. The blacks were to be dealt with, and the nonsense was to be taken out of them. You can do with a horse, sometimes, what you cannot do with the most learned disquisition that was ever printed.

Neither member of the unruly team had injured himself to speak of in his mad antics of the day before, and within twenty minutes after Link had bolted his ham and eggs they were in harness. Not the gay equipment they had danced in so gingerly on their way to the Henderson homestead, but a strongly made, plebeian-looking breaking-harness, whose broad leathers and heavy buckles dimly suggested the idea of a strait-jacket for lunatic horses.

" The devil's in 'em yet," growled Link, " quiet as they look. Want to smash another buggy to-day, do ye ? See about that."

An inexperienced horseman might have been deceived by the manner in which the blacks submitted to be harnessed ; but it was plain enough to their present master that they did not like their new cloth-

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ing, and that an outbreak was only a question of short time.

It was a neat specimen of rapid handling, the putting of that span before the great solid-looking lumber wagon and getting them out on the road.

"The lane's down hill," said Link to his assistant. "We'll see, when we strike a level."

"Dade, Misther Bishop, they'll not run far with that load o' wheat."

"They'd kick it into flour if they had a chance."

"Faith, thin, their worruk's cut out for thim, the day."

They were in the road, now, and saw a clear space before them. They felt, too, more and more, the discomfort of the stiff, strong harness, and there was probably still in their veins a spark of yesterday's conflagration. It was as if one of them whispered to the other:

"Now's our time," and the other answered him:

"I'm ready. Go!"

Both together, a sudden forward lurch and spring, and even the big wagon and the load of wheat felt the power of it, and began to move more briskly.

Crack, crack, came the sharp cuts of Link's whip, and the movement became a trot; for he had been too wise to give them an impossibility to strain against. Only a dead certainty of hard work, and plenty of it.

There was an abundance of both bone and muscle in that span; for it was a good half mile before they showed the least sign of slackening their pace. They did so then, however, and Link was

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in a trifle of doubt as to whether he would better urge them on or give them a rest, when a sweet, cheery voice at the roadside sang out :

"Oh, Mr. Bishop, are you going to the mill? So am I."

"Why don't you ask me if I'll give you a ride, then?"

"Ask me if I'll ride with you. I'm as good as a sack of wheat, I hope."

"Now, Polly, if I ask you, you won't give me the sack?"

"Not if there's any wheat in it. I can climb up."

Polly Magoon was as old as Nell Davenport, but she was half a head shorter, a good deal rosier, and her fresh, healthy face lacked a great many things which might have been found by wise eyes in that of Nell. She was decidedly pretty, nevertheless, and she looked even more so when once her plump, active form was perched beside Link Bishop, and her arch, saucy smile mutely inquired of him and his horses why they did not move on.

The horses? Well, they had not been brought to a standstill for nothing, and they had taken time to think the matter over. Standing still for a while was the precise exercise they now proposed to themselves, and then only champed their bits in reply to their master's vocal urging. He had his own views of the matter, of course, but the moment he attempted to enforce them with his whip the blacks recalled to mind their success with the buggy, and jointly set about the good work of

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trying to send that wagon and load of wheat to keep it company.

The kicking-straps were there all ready for them, broad, strong, and deftly adjusted for the very emergency which was now rising against them. Two pairs of powerful hind legs constitute a crisis in the history of a brace of kicking-straps.

Before the disappointed animals, as the discovery of their dilemma dawned upon them, arose a long acclivity. Not steep enough to bar their way, with a reasonable load, but not so gentle as to loom invitingly to any team in front of a load of wheat. They looked, they kicked again; they reared for a moment in futile vexation; and then they again stood still.

"They're a fine team, Link."

"Good a pair as ever I owned, if I could get the nonsense out of them."

"But I want to go to the mill."

"They ruined my best buggy, yesterday."

"Did they? I saw you go by our house. Miss Davenport, was she frightened?"

"Not a bit, nor hurt either."

"Glad of it. She doesn't look as if she'd scare easy. Is there anything in her?"

"Don't you know her?"

"Used to go to school with her, before her mother married Mr. Henderson. She was nice enough then; but she's dreadfully stuck-up now."

"No, she isn't. Wonder what I'd better do."

"So do I. I can't sit here all day."

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"What on earth do you want at the mill? Going to see Sol?"

"None of your business. Sol's old enough to be my father. Can't you use your whip?"

"Guess I'd better. Git up, now!"

Back instead of forward, and Link did but engineer their backward force, keeping the wagon in the road and plying the whip, until it must have occurred to that team that they had never worked at any one thing so disagreeable in all their lives.

"This won't bring us to the mill."

"Yes, it will."

"You're good company, Link; but your team is awfully backward."

Polly's fresh face looked prettier than he had ever seen it look before, as she sat there, mocking at him and his horses, and the fun of it seemed to grow upon her in an exact ratio with his vexation, until at last she broke out into a ringing peal of girlish laughter.

Neither whipping, nor shouting, nor the strain of their useless exertions had had any effect upon the blacks; but that laughter seemed to touch them somewhere. Did they comprehend that they were being ridiculed, and by a girl? At all events they suddenly threw themselves forward in their collars, and began to pull for dear life.

"That's it, Link. We shall get to the mill now."

"Laugh again, Polly."

She did, but the whip fell smartly over the con-

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quered team all the same, and they were not permitted to rest at the summit of their climb.

"Let me drive, Link."

"All right. They won't try to run away now."

"I'd laugh to see them."

"Laugh, then. I'll hire you to come and help me break horses."

"The trouble with you is, you don't laugh enough. Spend your evenings reading, instead of going around among the girls, and making yourself useful."

"Polly, I'm coming over to see you, first chance I get."

"Will you?"

"You see if I don't."

"I won't be at home, then, if I know when you're coming."

"Why not, now?"

"Oh, you're good enough to ride to mill with; but think of sitting with you a whole evening! I like somebody that can talk."

"Talk, Polly? Why, that's my best hold. I'll show you."

"Tell you what, Link, I'll let you come, once. You may come over, and tell me all about Nell Davenport."

"There isn't much to tell. Not that I know of. But I'll come."

"You needn't bring this team."

"When my buggy's mended, Polly, you've got to take a ride behind 'em."

"And be backed all around the county by 'em?

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Well, I don't know but what I'll go, if it's only to spite Nell."

Free of speech, healthy and hearty of mind and body, Polly Magoon was good company for Link Bishop that morning. She held a not unskilful rein over the blacks, moreover, and Sol Keating, the miller, winked very hard to himself as he saw her pull them up, smoking and panting, in front of his dusty old rattle-box.

"How she does carry it! And her father's nothin' but a jack-of-all-trades, neither. Link's nothin' to say, though. His father druv stage to start on."

Even the miller, under his mealy coat, therefore, could nurse the curious family histories of the local aristocracy and commonalty, and could say who could reasonably be expected to go buggy-riding with any given driver. Deep are the mysteries of caste, in a country whose farm laborers become its rulers, and whose proud women have little more than a turn of a kaleidoscope between them and the washtub.

Polly's errand was quite as much at the house of the miller's old mother, close by, as at the mill itself; but by the time the wheat was unloaded she was ready to climb once more to her seat by the side of Link Bishop.

"Seeing you're here, I might as well let you carry me home. I ain't a bit proud."

"Link," said Sol, "ain't you a breakin' loose a little? You was out with another gal yesterday."

"So he was," said Polly; "but he can't go for

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her again till his buggy's mended. 'Tisn't every girl'd let him take her to mill in a lumber wagon, with a load of wheat."

"You're as good as the wheat."

"Hand me that old sack, Sol."

"This 'ere? What for?"

"I want something to give Link when we get to our house. He's had plenty of sacks given him, before now."

"Think one more won't hurt him, do ye?" chuckled the miller, as he threw her the empty emblem of rural derision; but the laugh Link Bishop tried to raise was drowned in a remark he made to his team as he wheeled them sharply homeward.

"You needn't have done that, Link. They'd have backed all the way, now the load's out."

A merry drive she made of it, and that she was in no special awe of her companion grew so plainly evident, all the way, that for once in his life Link Bishop felt himself thoroughly piqued.

It was a good deal as if he had been told:

"No girl minds what she says to a musty book-worm of an old bachelor like you. Even Nell Davenport 'll go riding with you when company's hard to get."

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CHAPTER X.

THE STORY OF MARGARET.

KEMP HENDERSON was astir at an earlier hour than usual, the morning after his parting with his fashionable associates. He had promised not to be more than a day or so behind them in arriving at Daynton, and they had been too polite to press him for reasons for his delay.

He had work before him, and he set about it with special energy; but there was a good deal going forward, during the same time, in the upper pair of rooms, back, at the tenement-house. Margaret also had risen early, and had commenced a morning of feverish activity.

His night's rest had done a great deal for her husband, and the excellent breakfast she brought him did more. He was actually able to dress, and sit up, and play with Kaiser and Lena. It had been a long time since they had known him to do that, and they were enjoying the rare treat accordingly. Everything seemed a treat to them, that morning, and, childlike, they were continually asking for more.

Lena, indeed, had little fits of silence, and it was out of one of these she broke with:

"Papa! papa! Mamma's got her ear-rings!"

"Jewelry, Margaret? Why, have I been blind?"

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"All the morning, I think, Wilhelm. Do you not see any other changes?"

He had seen, in a dreamy kind of way, that the rooms were neat, that the suit of clothes handed him was a good one, that his wife was looking well; but there had been nothing really new or unfamiliar, and he had been accustomed, of late, to having matters around him cared for without any effort of hand or brain on his part. Now, however, there flashed upon him a sudden memory of yesterday —of the rooms as they looked then, of empty trunks and wardrobe, and of hungry children and a half-despairing, ill-clad woman, telling him she had nothing to give him for his breakfast. She had said then that she would go, and get something. She had left him—he knew not exactly when or for how long—and she had returned. She was standing before him now, with tears in her eyes and blushes on her face, and jewels upon her hands, in her ears, and on her quite respectable attire. What could it all mean?

"Margaret?"

"O Wilhelm! I could not have accepted a dollar from him, if it had not been for you and for them."

"Margaret?"

"O Wilhelm! husband!"

"Mamma! mamma!" piteously exclaimed poor Lena, and even Kaiser lifted his expanding blue eyes in a wonder of childish alarm.

At that moment there came a loud knock at the outer door, and Wilhelm glanced fiercely in that direction.

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"He has come! He told me he would be here this morning."

"He? Who is he?"

"Husband! my brother—"

"O Margaret, you are cruel! Why did you not tell me? I shall never forgive myself."

She had sprung away from him; but she paused for a moment before opening the door. Womanly pride was rallying strongly within her at that moment; but the knock sounded once more, strong and full, and there could be no waiting. The door was opened, and Kemp Henderson strode manfully in, with the air of one who had fully made up his mind to something, and had come to do it.

"Good morning, Maggie. Ah, Mr. Bechtel? Glad to see you up. Maggie tells me you have been sick."

Wilhelm's hand was out, in a desperate effort to meet his brother-in-law in a frank and friendly way; but he could not utter one word, for his was now the moment of shame and humiliation He had unjustly half suspected his true-hearted, faithful, long-suffering wife, and he was feeling, at that moment, as if the floor under him should open, if it knew its duty, and let him down into the sub-cellar of the tenement-house.

"Sit down, do. Weak yet, eh? We must get you out of this, first thing. Well, now—"

Kaiser had crept up to him, and was pulling stoutly at one leg of his trousers, and Margaret was in the very word of saying:

"Lena, this is your uncle Kemp."

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A second more, and Kaiser was up against his uncle's face, and then it was Lena's turn. It was easier to put her down again, from the fact that, unlike Kaiser, she failed to grasp the advantage of Kemp's whiskers. There was no ice left to break by the time Margaret had answered all the questions her brother had to ask her about those children, and Wilhelm had quite recovered his outer self-possession. He was not yet able to look his wife in the face, and somehow her eyes were not in search of his. He was aware of it, but he hardly assigned the true reason for the phenomenon.

"Now, Mr. Bechtel—"

"Stop there!" sharply exclaimed Wilhelm. "It is time for me to be a man. I am not Mr. Bechtel."

"Whew! What's up? Margaret, I never met him but once, in Daynton; but I'd have sworn it was the same man."

"It is not true," said Wilhelm, firmly, his deep tones betraying a bare trace of his German birth. "That man was a fool. He was ashamed to wear his own name. We do not want any more to do with him. It is time to be honest. I am Wilhelm, Baron von Rahm. A poor, penniless, broken-down adventurer. A vagabond. All the worse because of my good blood, my education—I have been a sneak and a counterfeit."

"He is the best man in all the world," sobbed Margaret; "but he was so proud. He has done all he could. He is as good a husband as any woman could ask for, and he is as honest as the day."

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Poor Kemp Henderson!

If there was one thing in the world he hated and was unprepared for, it was a mystery. He detested such things, even in novels. He had worked himself into a state of mind to forgive his sister anything, and her husband for her sake. That is, if he should discover that there had been anything in the career of either which required forgiveness; for, concerning that, all his cogitations had left him in serious doubt.

He was therefore now in trouble, and he saw but one way out of it.

Dropping into the nearest cheap, wooden chair, he picked up Lena, put his hat on the floor, and remarked, desperately:

"Go right on, both of you. I want to know something. You forget how completely in the dark I am."

They looked at one another, for a moment, and it did them good to do so, for some hidden reason. Then they complied with Kemp's request, and went right on.

The story was a long one; but they managed not to make it so, in their eager haste to be understood.

Mr. Bechtel had been a music-teacher, and not a remarkably good one, during the short year he had spent in and about the good town of Daynton. He had met Margaret Henderson, during the fiercest heat of her daughterly rebellion against the idea of a new mother and a new mistress in her father's house. He had loved her, and she had married

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him, in spite of her father and of Nell Davenport's mother. A good deal more in spite of them than for any other reason, although genuine love for her husband had providentially followed. Kemp had been ignorant of all that, except the "disgraceful" result of it, the runaway match, and the disappearance of his high-tempered sister. She herself had been ignorant, for some time, of the true history of the man she had married; but it had not lowered him in her opinion when he told it to her.

The von Rahms were an exceedingly old family. Old enough, probably, to boast both Noah and Adam among their ancestors. Exceedingly old and proud accordingly, but of such narrow earthly possessions that their second son, in this generation, must needs be made a merchant-banker, instead of an officer in a crack regiment and an ornament of high life. So the proud soul of Wilhelm von Rahm had chafed out its first few years of manhood behind a banker's desk, and he had not failed to exhibit the good brains as well as good blood of his high lineage in his uncongenial occupation. He might even have learned to love it, and have grown to titled opulence, but for the mutability of all things human. Hardly had he reached the rank of junior partner, and his modest "portion" been paid in by his loving sire, before a turn came in the price of certain long lists of securities, and the house of Stegmeyer Brothers went into the *Gazette*.

It had been a terrible blow to the proud soul of the young banker-baron, and, mistaking ruin for

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dishonor, he had fled from the faces of the firm and its creditors, few enough of the latter knowing or caring whether he were yet a clerk or if he were entitled to blush when the paper of the concern went to protest.

He had even been such a fool as to hide himself under an assumed name, shun the haunts of trade, take up other occupations than those for which his training fitted him; and so he had done all in his power to close against himself every available avenue of success in life. He had crowned all by a romantic love and a runaway marriage with Margaret Henderson, and it was, after all, a point in his favor that his sensitive "honor" had been from beginning to end as irritably tender as her own upon the subject of applying to her family for aid.

The rest of the story could have been told beforehand by any person of ordinary, stupid common-sense. Vain struggles; disappointments; debts; pawnbrokers; a tenement-house; despair; brain-fever—with starvation or worse at the end of it, if God had not ordained otherwise.

God was a being, by the way, whom the family traditions of the von Rahms had for several generations omitted to take any account of, and that had been, from the first, the only drawback to the complete union of Wilhelm and Margaret. She had continued to insist, from the force of early education or otherwise, that a God there was, somewhere, even when Wilhelm seemed to prove the contrary in his exhaustive philosophy as well as from the experiences of their daily life. The latter

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train of argument, indeed, staggered her at times, and brought her a cloudy idea that God had somehow forgotten her, and her husband, and her children. It would, perhaps, be interesting to know how large a share of what passes for "belief," and even for faith, has reached and rested at the precise level of Margaret's vague notion.

She said nothing of it now, for there were so many other things to tell, though some of it leaked out through the crevices of that broken, tearful recital; but Kemp Henderson at last sprang suddenly to his feet:

"I've heard enough for once. Pack your trunks, Maggie. I'm going for a carriage. Just tumble things in. We can drive there in twenty minutes."

"Drive where?"

"Why, to your new quarters, of course. I found the best kind of a place. Retired, respectable, roomy. Von Rahm'll get well there, hand over fist. Hurry, now. Have the children ready."

The door banged behind him, and he was gone; but Margaret did not move at once toward her trunk.

A little timidly—a step at a time—five seconds—ten—and then her arms were around her husband's neck, and she was sobbing:

"Wilhelm! dearest! Please let Kemp have his own way, this time! Think of the children. Don't say no!"

"My darling! am I a brute? Yes, I am! A fool! A dog! A vagabond! What right would

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I have to forbid your own family helping you? Why, he is your brother. He is doing right. He is a man! I love him!"

The enthusiastic German blood of the von Rahms was rising splendidly in his wan face, and he actually helped hinder his wife, a minute or so later, in her hurried packing.

She did not put into her trunk all the queer properties their poverty had accumulated in those poor rooms. There were some things left to be divided as treasure-trove among the other tenants of the hive, after the owners had departed.

Less than an hour, and one of those who were to make the division stood at the top of the lower flight of stairs, remarking to some of the others:

"By me sowl it's quare. It's the same wan was here yisterday. He's carried her off, the now, and her mon wid her and the small wans. I niver seen the loike of that in me borrun days."

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CHAPTER XI.

A VOYAGE WITHIN A VOYAGE.

IT is possible that many of the *Hermetic's* elegant state-rooms were occupied by uncomfortable people, that second night out of port. There were two births in the one assigned to Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, for instance, and it would have been hard to say which of them contained the greater amount or the higher degree of sleepless uneasiness. The robust cashier himself was in all the misery of a sharp fit of seasickness, hour after hour, and the only attainable alleviation of his sufferings was to be found in his heroic self-assurance that it must of needs be short—with him. "It's a nonsensical sort of thing, anyhow, pet, and I'm sure it won't hang around me later than dinner-time to-morrow. Oh me! Augh! Ah-h!"

Mrs. Henderson's troubles did not come, so far as she was able to discern, from any disturbance of her bodily economies. Thus far, at least, her carefully adjusted system had not given her a qualm, and the steady motion of the *Hermetic* was pleasant, rather than otherwise. It should have lulled her to sleep, rocked in the cradle of the deep, and so forth; but it did not.

There was, in fact, a sort of chopping cross-sea running in the inner ocean of her mind, and the

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winds that blew there, where and whence they listed, were bringing up all sorts of things, as she lay, and listened to the recurring evidences that her second husband's body was just then so much worse off than his soul.

The whole human race is more given to dreaming wide awake than it is at all aware of.

Mrs. Henderson's cast of mind was, to the perception of those who knew her best, utterly unvisionary; but for some ungiven reason, there she lay, through several of the long hours of that night in mid-ocean, mentally gazing at the dreamy passage of an endless procession of strange phantasmagoria. It was as if they came out upon some lighted stage, by way of some dark entry from her memory, to be looked at, and to return by way of some other gangway, equally mysterious.

Our lives are made for us what they are in the effort to fulfil or by the decision to reject such dreams as come to us, and Mrs. Henderson's phantasmal visitors were fairly divided, if her comments could be trusted, between the two great classes of those which she had fulfilled in some way and those which she had put away.

There was one dream-actress who came before her most repeatedly and persistently, with most important parts to play. A very pretty girl. Just such a girl as would naturally have ripened with time into just such a woman as herself. Sixteen years old, eighteen, nineteen, twenty, always the same smiling and attractive creature, with admirers of varied patterns clustering around her at rural merry-

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makings, at sewing-circles and prayer-meetings, and at the wide door of a village meeting-house.

It was wonderful how many half-way and some all-the-way tender scenes the arisen memories led that young girl through; but from all of them she seemed to have been in a manner rescued by the strong hand of the god whom she worshipped, and to whom the woman she had ripened into could now offer her best sea-going thanks for so many escapes from sentimental peril.

"What if I had listened to him?".she said to herself of the other actor in one scene that seemed to have a full moon shining upon it. "He is only a blacksmith, to this day, and he has seven children. One of the boys is a minister. Or him, he'd never have been anything but a farmer. John Davenport? His farm was a splendid one when I married him. Nelly takes after him a good deal more than she does after me. It was not my fault that he failed in his speculations."

No, nor that the poor fellow had never been able to say "no" when the woman he idolized asked him for money. If he had, there would have been more left for her and Nell when he died.

That may have been one place where her god had failed her, as he sometimes does fail those who worship him unwisely, for the god of this world demands a certain degree of good stewardship from those who come to him for gifts.

It was wonderful, however, how large a share good looks and tenderness continued to take in the subsequent visions connected with that very pretty

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young woman. All in combination with a constant attendance upon the most respectable appliances of what passes in these days for the worship of quite another God than the one so successfully served and serving.

She could but acknowledge, almost audibly, as she lay and dreamed, that there had been one or two occasions when she had fallen short. It may have been in that matter of John Davenport's, considering how young and pretty she was at that time, or it may be she had then acted really for the best. Especially considering how it had turned out, and what remarkable success she had since obtained, and was now enjoying. Her narrowest escape had been earlier than that, and it made her sigh to think of it. Sigh so deeply that her second husband half arose in his berth, and inquired :

" Darling, is anything the matter with you ?"

" No, indeed, but I am so sorry you are ill !"

" Oh ! Don't mind me, pet. I shall have a tremendous appetite as soon as this thing leaves me. I'll—augh !—gain ten pounds before we get into port."

" I hope the trip will be too short for that."

" It won't, then. She's a dreadfully slow, old tub. Ah me !"

In another state-room, many paces distant down the long range of the *Hermetic's* iron frame, there was yet another wakeful passenger, but neither in bed nor seasick. Bolt upright on his chair, and facing the narrow window, through which the cool

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sea air was pouring, sat the mysterious stranger from India.

His face could hardly have been more than traceable through such a gloom as that, if it had not been for the snowy whiteness of his hair and beard and mustaches. It was odd, nevertheless, that a face so sun-darkened should show so very whitely as his was now showing, in any kind of light or darkness.

He was sitting slightly forward on his chair, and swaying slowly with the motion of the ship.

"Shall I live to get there?"

The words came with manifest difficulty and a half-suffocated sound, and one who could have peered keenly through the gloom would have seen that both his hands were pressed hard upon his bosom.

"That was a sharp spasm. Live, did I say? I did not mean that. I only meant shall I begin to live before I get there, or shall I keep on dying till I have seen them all. I can see them, now—the woods, the villages, the farms, the people. They are gone; but the hills and valleys are there yet. So strange it all is. I wanted to see her most of all, and He has given me that. I care less for the rest, now; I can hardly tell why. I seem to understand some things better."

The soliloquy was broken here and there by what were plainly brief moments of sharp pain, the last of which brought him to his feet, and forced him to lean for a minute or so upon the back of the chair; but no breath of complaint, no verbal recognition of

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his internal agony, escaped his lips. He appeared to note what might be going on in his mortal body purely as to its probable bearing upon other affairs.

The number of sane human beings who talk to themselves when they are alone is perhaps not so large as the playwrights and novelists would have us think, and these gentlemen are apt to make absurd mistakes about it.

Those who do not think at other times, or who have little to remember, never soliloquize. Secretive people, who take most counsel of themselves, do more of it than others; more, perhaps, than even those who suffer, and remember. Shakespeare is a good man for consultation by any who would find out the soliloquizers, and some of the grandest passages in Job were evidently addressed to himself, that he might listen to a vocal expression of his own mind upon the matters which troubled him. The stranger from India had a great deal to remember, and if he had never suffered before he was doing it now.

Talking to himself, there in the dark, out in mid-ocean, face to face with the question he expressed so unusually. There was something almost touching about it, and one could but hope that an hour would come when the white head could be laid upon its pillow, and the brave, benevolent face lose all its kindly sternness of patient endurance in the relaxing lines of slumber.

No such hour came, and yet, when the passengers of the *Hermetic* gathered for breakfast, all of them who cared to eat any, there was the stranger from

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India, calmly exchanging remarks about the weather with the captain on his right and the ship's surgeon across the table.

Not every Atlantic ferry-boat can boast such an additional security as the latter, and even on the *Hermetic* the duties of the health officer were combined with others of a somewhat non-professional nature. He was an educated gentleman, however, and had been among the first on board with whom the white-haired passenger had established an acquaintance.

"You have had a busy night?" politely inquired the latter, while he waited for his coffee.

"Of course, but most of them were rather cases for the steward than for me."

"Most of them? Are there any sick with worse than *mal de mer?*"

"Only one. But he's got his ticket, poor fellow."

"Who is he? Where?"

"In the steerage. But he is no common man, I can tell you. I told him he couldn't live the day out. Never ought to have come on board."

"Anything contagious?"

"No, unless old bullet wounds in the chest are catching, when they break out again and take a bad shape. Bad treatment in the first place, you see."

"Ah! I see. An old soldier."

"The less said about that, the better. He's beyond the police now, though. Won't see a priest, either, and there are three on board, in the cabin."

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"Wonder if he'd see me?"

"Of course he would. No more fear in him than there is in the ship's mainmast. Hates priests, that's all. Can't say I blame him much, but most men get over that when the surgeon gives them their certificate."

"I'll go with you, after breakfast. I've a special liking for soldiers."

"Of course—"

It was on the very lips of the good-hearted sailor-doctor to ask with what precise army the liking in question had been acquired; but he remembered his good breeding in time, and it was the captain who filled the conversational gap with:

"Between us three, the truth might as well be spoken. All we know of it. That does not include his real name; but he commanded a regiment for the Commune, and how he has dodged the police all this time is a wonder. Of course we knew nothing of this till he himself told Dr. Bistre, after he found there was no hope for him. He looked sick when he came aboard, but not enough so to call particular attention to him. It's a somewhat unusual case."

All the while they were talking about the dying communist and his old wounds, and the peculiar turn they were taking, the man himself lay sternly still in his narrow lower bunk in the steerage. The berths above him had discharged their occupants for the day. So had nearly all the other berths; for steerage passengers, as a rule, are not permitted to become so seasick as are those in the cabin.

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The crying of children was at its lowest ebb, by reason of breakfast, and the steerage was in excellent order and reasonably quiet.

Of those who were pacing up and down, or coming and going on various errands, the greater number glanced, without pausing, at the occupied bunk; for a whisper had gone around among them that the black eyes now staring so steadily upward would soon be closed. More than one had heard the whisper with a shudder and a remark about ill luck to the ship, and the seamen who came in with the buckets of soup had been inquired of, anxiously, if there was more than one shark in sight over the stern. It was with manifest relief that the inquirers learned that not so much as one black dorsal fin had shown itself above the water in or about the wake of the *Hermetic*.

Stern and still lay the black-eyed relic of the great French social and political convulsion. A well-shaped head, regular features that were not strikingly emaciated, the face of a man of the world and of the army, and not more than forty years of age. The stormy activities of his career must have begun while he was yet a youth, and it was quite likely that he had lived long enough. He may have been recalling the several gusts of his life's long tempest, or he may not, when some approaching footsteps paused beside the bunk, and the forms of two men bent down. One of them came down, down, till it was seated on the low stool that stood there. The black eyes turned suddenly upon him with an intensely inquiring expression, but seemed

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to be satisfied by that one keen glance, for the mustached lips opened faintly with :

"No, not a priest—" and then more loudly :

"This is kind of you, comrade. I have my billet."

"So the surgeon tells me."

"I was in doubt, at first ; but I know it now. He is right. I am dying."

"Did he say so ? He is wrong there."

"Wrong, colonel ? Did you say he is wrong ?"

Not eagerly nor with energy, but with the earnest, respectful tone of a soldier listening to a half-understood word from his commander.

"Not colonel—"

"You are a soldier ? You have served ?"

"Yes, I am a soldier, and I have served under the greatest of all commanders."

"Napoleon ! Your hair is white, but are you so old as that ? I beg pardon. I should have said general. But the surgeon is right, general ; I am dying."

"Not so, comrade. Your body is dying. You are not."

"Comrade, was it Napoleon ?"

"Greater than he. The greatest of all captains."

The color rose in the haggard cheeks of the dying Frenchman, and there was an increase of light in his eyes as he responded :

"It is impossible ! Who, then ?"

"Jesus the Christ. God."

"You are not a priest ?"

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"No, indeed. Only a soldier."

"You have a right to your opinion. There is no God. But I am not such a coward as to speak against a man like Jesus of Galilee. He was the greatest of all Jews. I was born a Jew."

"I am only a Jew by adoption. But the Nazarene was the Jehovah for whom we waited. I think you will know more about him before many hours."

"The surgeon is right, then? What was that you said about my not dying? Do I not know that I am?"

"You know that your body is. That is all. You are a man of courage. Look me in the eye."

The piercing black eyes, which had so often looked death in the face on battle-fields, did not vary in their dauntless firmness as they met the deeper, more brilliant, more penetrating ones of the man from India; but their owner was silent.

"Think. Were you ever more alive than now?"

"I feel it—never!"

"You will be just as much so, to-morrow, after we sink your body in the ocean."

"What is it that will live?"

"You—without change, except that of one body for another. I think you will hardly be conscious of that."

"What about the long sleep the priests tell us of?"

"The Christ said nothing about that. He himself was less than a day and a half in passing."

"Thirty-six hours."

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"You need not worry concerning them. There is no time over there. Only duration."

"I understand. You almost make me expect to find it so. Will it be heaven or hell? If there is life there cannot be all a dead level. Not the same for you and me. I have known a good many devils."

"No angels?"

"Perhaps. I think I knew some who would not be at home in hell. More who would not feel at home anywhere else."

The gall and bitterness of a lost life poured itself into the last few words. He was evidently in pain; but no martyr at the stake could have endured with more heroic indifference the necessary annoyances of such a separation of a strong man from his body.

"You have looked back upon your life?"

"There has been much in it. Many things your God would punish, if there were such a being."

"Do you suppose He will trouble Himself then about those things?"

"Why not? They say so."

"No, comrade; He will only ask what your life has made of you. He knows now. Knows whether He or somebody else has guided you to what you are."

"Does He? Then what is the use of our talking about it?"

"Because you are still in your body. I would like you to have Him there with you now, that He may be with you when you wake up."

"They crucified Him. The brutal fools! I'd

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never have done that. I'd like to see Him now. I think He was a brave man."

"He is here."

"The Christ? Here?"

There was something almost terrible in the hungry gleam of the black eyes, and the steady-nerved surgeon had bowed his face upon his hands.

"Yes. In me. With me. I am His soldier. I have never served in any other army than His—"

"Why, general?"

"Only a missionary; but He is in me, and I come to you, in His name and power, to speak to you of your resurrection and of your life beyond that. Do you not perceive clearly that I am telling you the truth?"

"Perfectly. It has all come to me, while you were talking. But I never heard any such thing before. I think even a Jew could understand that. Anybody but a devil, such as I have known."

"I am glad, indeed—"

"But what am I to believe? What is your creed?"

"Precisely what you have already confessed. You believe already."

"I? Believe?"

"Did you not say so? Do you not see clearly that He came, and died, and rose again, and that so you will do the same? Do you not believe that He is God?"

"I cannot help it! No. It is not that I believe, I see!"

"That is faith! Doctor!"

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The surgeon dropped his hands from before his face, and on that there was an almost frightened look, as he glanced toward the white and sharpening one upon the narrow pallet.

"I hardly expected it so soon. The excitement has hastened it. There, it will last but a few seconds—"

These passed, and then the sheet was drawn a foot or so higher up, and the living soldier walked slowly away from the bedside of the dead one.

"General Morrow—"

"Only a missionary, doctor, as I told him. But what is it?"

"I wanted to ask about him. Is he living now? Will he go to heaven?"

"He sleeps, and he will awake. He has yet to learn what will come after that. He will learn it from the lips of Him of whom he really never heard before, but in whom he was even now able to believe—yes, and to see."

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CHAPTER XII.

MY LORD AT DAYNTON.

THERE could have been no good reason assigned why Carlton Forsythe and Lord Bulleshue should take an earlier train than they did, for their departure from the city.

His lordship, indeed, the night before had met the suggestion of such a thing with a prompt demurrer.

"Not if a later train is to be had, my dear boy."

"There's one will bring us into Daynton before tea-time."

"Commend me to that same train. The sleeping one gets in this delightful country of yours is like the oysters of it. I'll not wilfully lose an hour of such an article. Are there many early worms in Daynton?"

"To tempt birds of your feather to unseemly hours?"

"It's not that I'm so fond of worms; but I'm ready for almost anything in the way of sport."

He looked it, in every line of his jovial, manly face, and he sought his room with the air of a man who had a tremendous job of slumbering before him, and meant to do it thoroughly.

All other types of male humanity take kindly to the like of Lord Bulleshue; but the curious fact remains that sentimental females but diffidently

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open toward them the tentative fly-traps of their admiration. There is something about such men too big and breezy for small, thin loves to throw themselves around. So it comes to pass that women feel perfectly safe to flirt with them, in their own hearty and not unwholesome way, until the day when they astonish "society" by the announcement of their marriages to "the last persons in the world" society had dreamed of naming for them.

They are good fun, all the while, and an anti-dyspeptic blessing to the world they live in.

It was the mid-day train, therefore, which bore the two friends from the great city, and it was late in the afternoon when it landed them in the small one.

The latter was quite ready for them, especially all that part of it which was covered by the ancestral shingles of the Raynor mansion.

It was not tea-time there, however, by any means. The lady of the house knew all too well the manners and customs of the upper world from which her coming guest had graciously descended. Six o'clock P.M. would be her dinner hour so long as a genuine English lord should fold his wings beside her table. A good dinner, well served and well presided over. There was no question of that whatever, and Mrs. Raynor experienced a feeling of real gratitude to her elegant daughter for the exceptional radiance with which she shone upon those two unexceptionable young men.

Carlton Forsythe also was proud of her, and so

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was her father, and she herself was proud of her success in drawing out Lord Bulleshue.

"She made me make quite a fool of myself. She did, indeed," the latter afterward remarked to Forsythe, over their cigars. "Made me talk of everything; and I couldn't help it. Let me see; have I really been, now, in all the places I told her I had?"

"I think not," drawled Forsythe. "I was listening, and I'm quite sure I caught you out once or twice."

"Her fault, then. But I'm no match for the girls of this wonderful country. By the way, were those oysters from the sea-shore, or do they raise them up this way?"

"Why? Did you miss the voice of the sea?"

"Not that, exactly. But it occurred to me I heard one of them say he was thinking of his mother."

"Can't be. They come here fresh, every day. Express trains."

"That's it, then. The motion of the cars. Fatigue. No oyster can stand it. And yet the other eleven seemed unwearied."

The entrance of Mr. Latimer Raynor, at that moment, suggested that the smoking-room was but a way-station between dinner and the ladies, and Lord Bulleshue was compelled to gather his resources for another conversational campaign.

"I declare," he said to himself, "if I'm cornered like that again, I'll sing."

Before the evening was fought out, his lordship

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was singing, with Carlton Forsythe at the piano and Katherine hunting her portfolio for old songs.

He sang well, but with a touch of melancholy in his deep, rich voice, which must have been put there by a sense of utter defeat.

If the shellfish of Daynton were open to question, when opened, the sleeping was undeniable, and again Mrs. Raynor's intuitive knowledge of the habits and customs of higher orders of being came to her assistance.

"Breakfast, Latimer? You can 'ave yours at the usual time, if you must."

"It will be a sharp day at the bank, my dear."

"But I shall not think of disturbing 'is lordship before nine. If 'e makes an earlier appearance we shall be quite ready."

"What about Forsythe?"

"Do you not remember? When 'e was 'ere before 'e professed to 'ave lost the art of eating breakfasts."

"Yes, I remember. Reads all night, sometimes. No bank on his hands, and the cashier gone."

"I am glad 'e 'is, and 'is wife with 'im."

"Well, to tell you the truth, so am I."

He said it heartily, and Mrs. Raynor may have imagined that his joy sparkled from the same pure social spring with her own.

She had somewhat miscalculated, however, the customary somnolence of her distinguished guests. Partly, perhaps, because there was nothing customary about it, for Lord Bulleshue was almost desti-

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tute of habits. That is, he had so many that they ate each other up like a good-natured lot of Kilkenny cats. One of the most voracious of them all was a tendency to be up with the sun, on any morning favorable for good walking, and to take a sharp "constitutional" across country, with small reference to anything earthly but the surface conditions of the earth itself.

These were all good, that morning, and not a soul in the Raynor homestead witnessed the early outing of the titled pedestrain.

A fine morning, truly, and well adapted to Link Bishop's second experiment with his fractious team.

Link was rapidly falling in love with those horses, and he was determined on making a clean conquest of them both if they should not break his neck for him during the courtship.

The breaking-harness was upon them, therefore, by the time the sun looked over the hills, and a stoutly made, not too valuable buggy was behind them, and Link's own hands were on the reins and on his heaviest whip.

The blacks were likely to be the recipients of marked attention, to say the least, and they may have guessed as much; for they trotted away from their own gate squarely and honestly. They could not go far, of course, without discovering the absence of the lumber wagon, with its disconcertingly heavy cargo, and they spoke to one another about it.

"It's a light weight," was the probable comment

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of the off horse, as he nudged his companion with his nose.

"No wheat. No girl. It's a fine morning. Let's have some fun."

"All right. You pick out a good spot to begin."

Up and down the road, at a good rate of speed, a half a mile and back, and Link was beginning to discount the future of his experiment. He even drove on till he came in sight of the modest cottage through the kitchen window of which Polly Magoon could see him coming.

Her hands were out of the dishpan in an instant, and she had barely time to wipe them dry and reach the front door before the blacks were rearing and kicking their very best, within twenty yards of the gate.

Link knew she was there, as well as if her merry chuckle had been uttered upon the seat beside him! But he did not look in her direction.

He had something of an excuse for that, too.

Up the road came striding, at a preposterously vigorous, swinging gait, a long-limbed, broad-chested stranger, with all sorts of a yellow beard, a soft hat and a common-looking tweed suit of clothes.

"You've a fine pair of fellows there, I must say."

Link's only reply, for the moment, was a half surly nod and an inarticulate grunt.

"Fine fellows. But they'd be a trifle quiet for me. And they're putting in too much work on one spot."

"Are you looking for a job?" growled Link,

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averting his head more persistently from the side toward the cottage, while the blacks slackened their dance for a moment to consider if it were time to back.

"Exactly. Want a man that knows something of horses?"

"Just out of a place, or have ye been on the tramp all summer?"

"Every day of it. Haven't earned a shilling."

"Had your breakfast?"

"Not a mouthful since yesterday."

"You don't say!"

Lord Bulleshue's first thought, all unexpressed, had been:

"If he doesn't take me for a navvy out of work!"

But his second had done better credit to his penetration:

"Here's an original. I'll have some fun. He's full of chaff."

So he was, and they had it back and forth for a few seconds longer, in spite of the continued misconduct of the team. These were beginning to force the buggy backward in a dangerously irregular manner, when the Englishman exclaimed:

"You need more weight. I'll do what I can for you."

The agility with which he sprang to the vacant place at Link's side was remarkable, considering that neither invitation nor assent of any sort came to spur him to such an effort. At that moment, however, a ringing burst of merriment from the front gate of old Magoon's yard was followed by:

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"That's it, Link; let him help you. I was just coming."

"She's done it!" said Link, as the backing suddenly ceased. "Laugh again, Polly!"

"I declare," remarked Lord Bulleshue, as he lifted his hat, and bowed profoundly to the merry maiden at the gate:

"The girls of this wonderful country beat me entirely."

"It's the first pair I ever owned," muttered Link, "that were afraid of being laughed at."

"That's it, is it? Small blame to them. Could they be induced to use their forefeet a little?"

They were both upon their after hoofs, at the moment, but before Link could frame an answer they were plunging forward.

"Good by, Link. I can't go with you this morning."

"'Pon my soul!" exclaimed Lord Bulleshue. "I've done it. But she couldn't have got in, you know."

"You're all right. I only wish you'd had your breakfast. You might weigh something, then."

"Fact. Would you mind my taking the reins?"

Link Bishop fairly turned in his seat to look at the man who could make so cool a proposition.

A horseman, training a vicious pair, to give the reins into the hands of an entire stranger!

"I know, now, how you came to lose your place. Yes, you may try them on. They're getting worse and worse, every minute."

They had been doing that very thing, their own

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tempers rising in thoroughly equine sympathy with Link's own, and he ought to have understood it, considering how many colts he had raised and broken.

The Englishman's hand was neither firmer nor stronger than Link's; but there was more than strength in the great, hearty laugh with which he baffled the first attempt made by the blacks to break away from him.

"Look here, mister," said Link, "you take hold well. What's your name?"

"Bulleshue, my boy."

"Bless away—I don't mind it; but what's your name?"

"Bulleshue," again responded the Englishman, with a deep chuckle and an intentional shortening of the syllables.

"Bleshew, is it? Lord bless you, what a name!"

"That's it, exactly—they're beginning to come down. The nigh horse has found his feet. There they are. By Jove, they're trotting famously!"

They were on the two-mile level now, and his lordship's blood was bounding in his full veins with the splendid excitement of that race-like drive.

"Used to horses, I should say."

"Yes, had one of my own once. That was in the old country."

"Been over long?"

"Only a little while. Been tramping around ever since I came ashore. Great country. Best oysters in the world. Prettiest girls. Some good horses, too."

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"That's a pair of 'em. Made up your mind where you're going to settle?"

"Settle? Well, no. I've taken the greatest liking to being unsettled. I'd no idea 'twould suit me the way it does, do you know?"

"You'll get good and sick of it when cold weather comes. No breakfast is a bad beginning for a January day."

"Breakfast? By Jove! Now I think of it—"

"Turn at the crossroads, yonder. We'll drive right back to my house. Have some fodder fixed for you in no time."

"Sorry, my dear fellow, very; but I promised a good lady in town I'd come to her, this morning, if I wanted anything to eat."

"She'll get over it, if you don't come. Plenty of tramps in Daynton all the while. Come right along with me."

"Can't, 'pon honor. Never broke a promise in my life. Rather starve, I assure you."

"Guess you never did much of that. Drive on, anyhow. I've an errand in town. Might as well 'tend to it."

"Carry me in, eh? And I came out for a walk, too. They're stepping out as squarely as a pair of old wheelers. Let me drive to town, now, there's a good fellow."

"Go ahead. Two or three more miles of this'll leave 'em safe to hitch when we get there. Then if I don't go back after Polly Magoon you may shoot me."

"That's the sweet little creature at the gate?

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I might have known she'd have some name that would fit her. By the way, you forgot to tell me your own. How'll I find you if I make up my mind to settle near this, and want to come to your place for a job?"

"Ask for Link Bishop. Anybody in the county can tell you where to find me."

"Link—Bishop. It's a name I won't forget. I'm vastly indebted to you."

"For what?"

"For the best appetite I've had in a month. I could eat the off black if you'd make a roast of him."

Glorious spirits he was in as they rattled into Daynton; but he was every moment becoming more and more of a puzzle to his companion. Link felt strongly drawn to a man, of any nation whatever, whose tastes and accomplishments were so nearly akin to his own; but he was fast losing all capacity to keep up the fiction of the wandering tramp. He hardly knew how to break the ice of it, however, and it made him feel more and more awkward every minute.

There was surely no disgrace in entering any town behind such a team as that, in or out of breaking-harness; but Lord Bulleshue was about to inflict a terrible shock upon the sensitive nerves of his hostess.

Mrs. Raynor had at last made up her mind that the proper hour had come, and Forsythe had promptly responded to the summoning knock at his chamber door. He would be visible in a few minutes.

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A much more perplexing piece of news was brought back by the same servant when he reported to his mistress :

" T'other feller's gone, mum."

" Gone? Lord Bulleshue gone? What can you mean?"

" Room's empty, mum, and all his clothes there, too, 'zackly where he throwed 'em when he took em off."

There was evidently at that moment, before the mind's eye of that servant, a wild vision of a crazy Englishman fleeing across country in his night-gown ; but Mrs. Raynor failed to perceive or accept it.

It was Katherine whose quick intellect found, and offered the solution of the problem, just as " Robert" added to his dark recital :

" His boots is there, too, mum, just where I put 'em."

She exclaimed : " Why, mother, he would not wear evening dress, if he went out for a morning walk."

" Katherine, how stupid I am! Why it's a matter of course. They always do it. How could I have been so forgetful?"

How could she, indeed! Of all her intimate association and acquaintance with the ways of the high aristocracy of England. It was so long ago, to be sure ; but she should not have forgotten.

That both mother and daughter speedily drifted to the front of their dwelling was a matter of course, and they were witnesses, from open win-

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dows whose curtains all but met, of the return of their missing guest.

Mrs. Raynor had just remarked: "How careless! Somebody has left open the eastern gate of the drive. There'll be stray pigs in the grounds if it's not shut at once," when a span of large, black horses, whose approach up the street had been made at an unseemly speed, suddenly wheeled with beautiful precision through that very gate.

"Mother! mother!"

"You are right, Katherine, it is Lord Bulleshue himself. Do not let him see you."

"But, mother, do you see who is with him? That dreadful fellow, Link Bishop, that is so much with Kemp Henderson."

"He'll never dream—"

"His lordship does not know—"

"It is some mistake—"

"Some accident I'm sure."

"Lord Bulleshue is driving."

It was really dreadful; but worse was to come, for even as the buggy paused in front of the door, and the latter swung hospitably open, his lordship sprang lightly to the grouud, and the deep voice of Link Bishop rang through the offended windows:

"There you are, Bleshew. Eat a good breakfast, if they don't go back on you."

"You can trust me for that, I think," laughed back the deeper bass of the big Englishman.

"I guess so. Don't fail to come out, and see me, now, Bleshew. The blacks'll need another lesson to-morrow, and next day, and the day after."

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"Tell you what I'll do, my boy, if you're quite sure they'll be full of mischief to-morrow morning—"

"Sure of it. Full as an egg is of meat. Plenty of fun."

"I'll come, my boy. Remember me to Polly. Day-day."

"Good-morning, Bleshew."

Could anything worse than that have happened, in Mrs. Latimer Raynor's front yard, with herself and her daughter looking out of their windows to see a real English nobleman come to breakfast?

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CHAPTER XIII.

WORLDLY WISDOM.

KEMP HENDERSON had been worldly wise in the selection of a new home for his sister and her family. The locality was retired, but not too far up-town, and the boarding-house itself was of unimpeachable respectability.

Margaret was more than satisfied, and her heart was too full of her new hope and of gratitude for the entertainment of thoughts relating to the cost of so much comfort.

The landlady received her new boarders with great respect; for Kemp had not only tendered superfluously good references, but had paid one month's board in advance.

His own personal appearance, and that of Mr. and Mrs. von Rahm and the children, when they came, were certainly all any reasonable boarding-house keeper could have asked for, and the reserve they then and afterward so carefully maintained did them no harm.

Von Rahm himself looked like a different man already, for there are no other such restoratives as relief and hope, in cases like his. Kemp said to him:

"Your sole duty is to get strong. There are plenty of openings for men like you."

Then he almost imperiously insisted on a fur-

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ther conversation, bearing upon his brother-in-law's business training and capacity.

Margaret looked at him, from time to time, as he sat there with Lena on his lap, in a sort of silent wonder. Her previously fostered notions concerning her younger brother, those of a strong-willed elder sister, had completely vanished in the vigorous presence of this strangely arrived and provident man.

Kemp himself had little idea how fast he was growing, or how many years of the elastic phantasm called "time" were condensing into the solid deeds of the few hours since he had recovered his sister.

"I have no fear that you will be extravagant," he said to Margaret; "but you must make von Rahm dress right up. There's a business point in it. I've an idea in my head for him, and it calls for a new suit from head to foot. He will be fit for work in a week."

"I will," stammered von Rahm.

Kemp's stay was not a long one that morning; but he promised to see them again before returning to Daynton.

"I will ask you then about all the people there," said Margaret. "I could not do it now."

"Of course not. I'll talk when I come. Kiss me, Kaiser."

His feet were quickly out of the house, after that; but they were too slow for him, and a cabman received extra fare for bearing him down-town at a proper rate.

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Straight to a great banking institution, whereof the concern in Daynton was an honored correspondent, and into the office of its president. That is, Kemp himself, the cab being discharged at the door.

The great financier knew his young visitor, had even met him at Newport, and he received him accordingly; but Kemp went very directly, if not altogether clearly, into the business which had brought him there.

"A place, my dear young friend? We are more than full. Not a thing you would look at for a moment. By the way! Don't say a word."

He touched the little silver gong on the table before him, and added, as a clerk's head showed in the doorway:

"Tell Mr. Boyd I'd like to see him for a moment."

A gray head appeared this time, and a few hurried questions and answers were exchanged, whereof Kemp caught the drift rather than the meaning.

"Mr. Henderson, the fact is this. One of our heaviest customers, a private house, fine concern, is about to lose its foreign account clerk. If your training had only fitted you I should be most happy—"

"That's the very thing, and I believe von Rahm would take it, if it were offered him."

"Von Rahm?"

"My brother-in-law. It's about him I'm speaking. He was the junior partner of Stegmeyer Brothers, at the time of their failure. Knows all

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Europe. Trained banker. Your friends can't get such a man every day in the year."

"Stegmeyer."

A rapid conversation followed, in which a good many things came swiftly to the surface, among others the fact that there were personal differences between von Rahm and his father-in-law, now in Europe.

"They wouldn't mind that," the bank president said of his neighbors; "but the position is one of responsibility. They will be sure to demand a deposit."

"Security? I see. How much?"

"Well, not less than from five to ten thousand."

"Von Rahm can deposit ten. I will answer for that."

"You say he has been out of health. Getting strong, and so forth? When can they see him?"

"Any day next week. Let me hear from them. I'll run to town, and bring him down myself. He's a splendid fellow."

"You'll surely hear from me, or from them, one way or another. Going? Good-day. If I have an opening I'll keep it for you. I'd like to have a clerk trained by your father and Mr. Raynor."

Kemp was outwardly calm enough not to appear too thankful. He had even kept up his position as to the great catch von Rahm would be to any banking-house lucky enough to secure his services; but for all that his heart was beating pretty vigorously when he once more found himself upon the sidewalk.

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"Lord Bulleshue is right," he exclaimed aloud. "In any moment of special excitement, go and eat twelve raw oysters. I'll do it at once."

It was luncheon hour, and the prescription was not a bad one, for by the time the last half-shell was bare, Kemp Henderson's head and heart were once more in fine working condition.

That was a good deal more, however, than von Rahm could say of his own, or Margaret either, at the end of the talk which was had, during Kemp's second call at the boarding-house, that day.

He succeeded, at last, in shutting off von Rahm's desperate attempts to express his gratitude.

"Now, hold on. It's a good operation for me, in a money point of view. My ten thousand will be safe, and I'd as lief draw the interest on it through you as in any other way. You'll have a good salary, and can pay back all I let Margaret have now. And when you get to be a great banker you can give me good points to make turns on, and you can cash my paper and all that. It's a good thing for the family. I'm no fool about it."

That was one way of regarding the matter, and surely there was worldly wisdom in it; but even Kemp was saying to himself that he had never before known that he had so much.

Margaret's questions about Daynton people were a little guarded. She made, for instance, but brief reference to the Raynors, and she utterly ignored the existence of Nell Davenport.

Kemp himself spoke of her; but he added, carelessly:

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"She has never mentioned your name to me, that I can remember. But then we do not often have much to say to each other."

Margaret's face flushed an approval of that; but she made no further remark, and Kemp took his departure shortly after.

He also took the evening train for Daynton, and left behind him the best piece of good work he had ever as yet done. Not finished, to be sure, but in very good condition; for the down-town banking-house was already looking up the record of the Stegmeyer bankruptcy, and had telegraphed its German correspondents to know if there were any exceptions to be taken to the good name or trustiness of Wilhelm von Rahm.

If not, and if he could really deposit ten thousand dollars, the course of events seemed to promise fairly well for him.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE FUNERAL AT SEA.

THE remainder of that third day of the *Hermetic's* voyage was to a certain degree dull. Not much more than half of her passengers were out of their state-rooms, and a large minority of these yet lacked the full use of their sea-legs.

The weather was magnificent, however, and the good ship ploughed steadily on, in a sort of stolid vindication of her reputation. The most timid pacer of her ample cabin could but feel a sense of security stealing over him, as hour after hour the great steamer went forward, so tremendously, with the gigantic performance of her special functions.

The news of the event which had occurred in the steerage crept up with difficulty through the many barriers between that and the comparative heaven of the cabins. Angels care little, after all, for the woes of human beings, and hardly a ripple followed, anywhere beyond the carved and gilded doorway of the saloon, the rumor that there had been "a death among the emigrants."

Neither of the men who had been at the bedside of the departing communist colonel made mention of the fact, or passed any uncalled-for opinion as to the port for which he had departed.

There was, indeed, no call for any expression of opinion. The doctrine governing such cases is but

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too well understood by all the cabin passengers of this wisely graded world of ours, and is applied equally well, afloat and ashore.

Steerage passengers, on land or sea, when they die, go to their proper place, of course. It may not necessarily be a place of torment in every case, but to something so nearly corresponding to a "steerage" that they will not unpleasantly jostle the nobler existences who have duly paid for state-rooms. This is one of those tacit and most comfortable assurances of well-bred faith which it were a pity to disturb by disputations or vulgarly inquisitorial remarks.

So neither Morrow nor the surgeon said a word to stir the matter up.

It was a minor consequence of their reticence that the notion concerning the military character and rank of the tall stranger from India grew, and spread, until no real doubt of its validity remained.

The ship's officers and company, at the same time, remarked that their medical man wore a more subdued and sober face than usual, and seemed to be thinking about something. Not one of them all connected the surgeon's thoughtfulness with the fact that he had lost a patient, and they were right, for if the truth could have been known the worthy man of science was wrestling with a brand-new problem. He put it to himself in many forms, and half determined, at last, to submit one of them for the consideration of Morrow.

"If you are right, and if that fellow is to be walking around, to-morrow or next day, and if he

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will then be himself and nobody else, what will be the symptoms exhibited by his old bullet-holes? Particularly with reference to that aperture in his left lung and the ruptured pectoral adhesions?"

The proper performance of his duties deprived him of any immediate opportunity, and he was compelled to wait. Another night came, and the before-bedtime hours of it went by in an increasing peace and general seaworthiness to the whole ship's company.

Those of the latter who for any reason were desirous of a word with the stranger from India were as a rule disappointed. They did not see him in the cabin or on the hurricane deck; for the good reason that he was busy about somebody's business, not his own, passing from man to man, among a number of other people in the steerage and elsewhere, who had not been either looking for him or expecting him. When he had done with them he found his way to his state-room with the air of a man who had something heavy on his shoulders, and wanted very much to lay it down. He may have been weary.

That was a good night for Mr. Henderson, and it ought therefore to have been so to his loving wife; but for some reason or other she again had altogether too many dreams, and she could not sleep to her satisfaction, as did her husband. She could only lie awake, and envy him, and tell herself how glad she was that he was so comfortable.

The sun arose cloudlessly, the next morning, beyond the long reaches of the heaving sea. It

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was almost strange that the whole heaven should spread so bright a smile above a funeral.

There are a great many things on this earth of ours whereof the gloom is much more clearly perceptible to us than it can possibly be to any one looking down on it from above.

Not that any deep shadow of gloom settled over the *Hermetic* simply because her captain ordered a decent ocean burial for all that was left on board of the communist colonel. On the contrary, the whole affair assumed somewhat the color and air of an "event," and the idea got abroad in the cabin that it would be the correct thing to attend the ceremonies, whatever they might be. Not a soul of them, it would seem, had ever looked upon such a performance before, and it would be something to tell of afterward. From that point there was but a step to the formation of a vague perception that the death and burial was but a kind of "extra," preconceived and arranged for their special benefit.

There can be no doubt whatever of the correctness of that view, since there was never a burial yet without a distinct message to those who looked upon it, and there was never a message received by any human being, since the world was made, but that it was sent, with more also than was accepted, from an intelligent purpose, provision, and preparation.

If modern science, serving even the extreme of positivist philosophy, has done one good thing more thoroughly than another, it has been the elimination from the calculations of all sane men of

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the stupid heathenism which can regard any event, however small, as an "accident." It has thereby unintentionally resolved the universe into its divinely declared constituents of Will, Action, Result, and has left no small crannies for the purely Incidental to hide in.

The funeral of the wreck of that one human protest against the social organism of Europe, therefore, was a strictly prearranged part of the present voyage of the *Hermetic*, and it was for the benefit of the cabin passengers, though perhaps not more so than for that of others on board who did not come to it from that part of the ship.

It was greatly to the credit of the ladies that they all paid proper respect to the occasion, and appeared in strictly appropriate toilets. Mrs. Henderson, in particular, as her husband noticed, looked even more than commonly fascinating in her subdued colors of clothing and somewhat diminished color of face. Any lady of proper feeling should be a little pale at a funeral at sea.

Lack of sleep had aided her, truly, and there may have been other helps; but a yet greater one was coming. She had already obtained from Mr. Henderson the information that he did not know which of the three priests, whose dignified sanctity she had observed and admired, was to officiate, and she was looking at them when she remarked:

"Perhaps all of them. I've heard that it takes more than one."

They were standing together on the hurricane deck, those three, at the moment, and the taller

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of them, with the more intelligent face, was saying, in a subdued tone, to his plump, smooth, severe-faced comrades :

"By no means. We can take no part ; but we must not seem to keep too far away. We must never give offence, brethren."

"But our presence—"

"We are mere passengers. For my part, I should like to hear and see what that man will do. He interests me. I wish the Church had a hundred thousand like him."

The wise-faced priest was evidently a man of sense and a little emancipated from Middle Age notions ; for he managed to secure a position from which he could see and hear whatever might be done in the way of obsequies over the fugitive from the French police. His companions, lower in ecclesiastical rank as well as in mind and stature, kept a pace or two behind him, that any spiritual harm radiating from heretical solemnities might be authoritatively intercepted on its passage in their direction.

There was something of a surprise at about that time ; for when four sailors bore to the gangway the rude box, so heavy at one end with its fragment of iron ballast, the man referred to by the priest, and who stepped forward to the side of it, book in hand, was the white-headed soldier from India.

Short was his reading ; shorter still his prayer ; and then he said :

"It is written that in the day of the judgment of

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human spirits, the sea shall give up the dead that are in her. This earthly ocean, into which we now commit this body, for which the man who wore it has no more need, will not be known there. In this sea there are no dead. From this sea will there come neither dead nor living. Whether this man went from us to join the oceanic multitude written of as the 'sea' of the judgment, I know not, nor whether in it, if he is in it, he is accounted spiritually dead. It is, however, my earnest hope and expectation that his voice will then rise in chorus with those who are there accounted as living. With those who, as it is written, as with the voice of many waters, tumultuous, stormily exulting, unite forever in the great, new song which they did not learn to sing a note of with the lips of the flesh on earth."

The long arm he had lifted while speaking fell slowly at his side, and as it fell there was a momentary rattling of pulleys, a faint splash in the leeward waves, and the funeral had taken place.

It was at that instant that Mr. Henderson suddenly noticed how closely, heavily, his wife was clinging to his arm, and how very pale she was.

"You are agitated, my darling. You had better go to your state-room."

"Yes, yes, right away. I think I had better lie down."

Not even the calm priest had watched with so keen an interest the earnest face and flashing eyes of the officiating "heretic." More than once, strangely enough, her whiteness had briefly inter-

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changed with quick, hot flushes of crimson. There could hardly have been any cause for that in anything which had been said concerning the sea or the dead communist. Her husband led her away; but the reverend fathers followed to the cabin a little slowly.

"Very singular quotations," remarked the shorter and fatter of the three.

"Have you any idea where they are to be found? I have never read any of their books."

"Books!" said his superior. "Oh, that was from the Bible. St. John's Revelation. The man blundered singularly near some of the old doctrines of the Church. We have almost forgotten them, nowadays; but they are in the Fathers."

"Ah, I see! He has been pilfering from our storehouse. But do the Protestants actually believe in Purgatory?"

"Every man of them, in one form or another. Some put it in this life, some in the next. Some call it repentance, and make it instantaneous and magical. Some lie about it. That's all the difference. They all see that a man must be cleansed, and belong to heaven before he can go there."

"And the fools refuse to see that the Church alone can prepare them, and assure their admission."

"That is part of the difficulty. But I am glad I heard that man. He would make a grand bishop."

Admiration, but with it a plainly perceptible and strong dislike, in which the worthy fathers were by no means alone. The great majority of the cabin

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passengers had experienced a shock. It was all in vain for them to tell one another that the dead man had been a soldier, an officer of high rank, and that so it was the correct thing for any other soldier and officer to pay him the last tribute of respect. The proper intoning of the customary printed service would have answered that purpose, and, to make it perfect, Morrow should have appeared in full uniform, and worn gloves, and had crape on his arm. He had neglected all that, and he had gone out of his way to preach, and say things nobody understood or cared to hear. As if any of the cabin passengers were ever to be buried in the deep, deep sea!

And the missionary himself? He had wandered away from his finished work as if he were in some sort of dream, his head bent, and his lips moving.

Now he was standing on the deck, near the stern of the steamer, gazing out upon her wake.

There was no shark-fin visible, nor had there been; but there was something living to watch. Not in the water, but above it. Now higher, now lower; now near, now far away; as the imperceptible motion of its wide, white wings, obeyed the free will of the one solitary albatross which had now chosen to keep the *Hermetic* company.

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CHAPTER XV.

LABORIOUS HOSPITALITIES.

THE "errand in town" of which Link Bishop had spoken did not detain him long after parting with Lord Bulleshue. It may be the most important part of it, certainly the most interesting, was accomplished when he saw the Raynor front door swing open hospitably to receive his remarkable companion, and then close behind him.

"I knew it would turn out to be some sell of that sort," he growled, as he wheeled his blacks toward the open gate by which he had entered. There was no one watching them from the windows now, and, although one of them put his reckless feet inside the well-kept border, they got around and out with as little further harm as could have been expected.

"Anyhow," said Link, "they'll give him a good breakfast. Wonder if he's one of Ma'am Raynor's English kin? Guess not. Don't seem to me exactly her style. He's a trump, he is, and I'll have him out again. Taught me one thing—I must keep a better temper over this team."

The lesson, unintentionally given, was a good one, and the rest of the morning's exercise proved it; but Link did not drive back past Polly Magoon's.

"They'd balk right in front of the gate, if I did,

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sure's you're born," he exclaimed at the turn in the road above. "And then she'd be out in a jiffy for another laugh at me."

If he was wise in that particular, or not, he was a good prophet concerning the breakfast at the Raynors, and he might safely have added something concerning the kind of justice done it by the hearty and hungry Englishman. If a human being really weighs more after much eating, a point relating to which there are differences of opinion, Lord Bulleshue would have been of greater use as ballast at the close of his dealings with the good things set before him. Even Carlton Forsythe felt called upon to compliment him upon the good effect of country air and long walks.

"Walks, my dear boy? It's very little walking I've done, indeed. Found an adventure before I'd done three miles."

"Ah! An adventure?"

"And two capital horses to pull it. Splendid kickers, both of 'em, and doing their conscientious best when I came up."

"Did you get a chance to help them any?"

"Did I? That's what their owner was doing. What I did was to jump in, and restore peace. With the help of Polly."

"The help of Polly?"

"That's what he called her. She's a laugh of her own that Mr. Link and his horses are horribly afraid of."

Mrs. Raynor was again proud of her daughter and of her irreproachably fine tact in dealing with

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her part of the conversation consequent upon Link, Polly Magoon, and the black span. It did sound so very much as if she saw all the fun, and enjoyed it to the fulness thereof. That, too, while she was mentally comparing the fierce excitement of Lord Bulleshue's morning work with the more sober and respectable airing she had planned for him, at a later hour, in her father's carriage. She said as much as that, and so skilfully that Lord Bulleshue was able to respond with something very nice about the passion he had for looking at fine scenery in good company.

"I've seen nothing at all, as yet, you know. Couldn't take my eyes from the team to look at the falls of Niagara. May have passed 'em, for all I know."

The ladies apologized for the absence of Mr. Raynor, of course, and his lordship's reply contained no mention of the fact that he had himself overlooked that little matter, until they spoke of it. He was not at all disposed to be critical.

Still, even as they looked at him, and saw how full he was of all life and activity, the thoughtful ladies wondered more and more, behind their morning smiles, what they should do to keep him occupied and amused during the next fortnight or three weeks. He did look so entirely capable of using up all the known resources of Daynton and its vicinity in half the time. Their eyes of hope unconsciously turned at the same instant toward the unruffled countenance of Carlton Forsythe, and they thought within themselves:

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"He will know what to do. He is never at a loss for anything."

There was a good deal in Mr. Carlton Forsythe, and a remarkably large proportion of it was genuine. Lord Bulleshue could hardly have been placed in safer hands if his lordly house had held a family council over him before trusting his precious life and happiness in America. There had been no council, and he had consigned himself to Forsythe as completely as if he had been a cargo of coffee and his friend a distributing merchant. Forsythe on his part had received him in the full and worthy purpose of repaying with interest the courtesies he had himself received when, a year or so before, he had visited the older country. A capital pilot he had been, and now that Lord Bulleshue had seen almost everything else, and wanted a glimpse of American rural life, and of its woods, lakes, and mountains, he had done well in bringing him to Daynton. Small blame to him if his devotion to his English guest could be made to pull in harness with a plan and purpose of his own. They could both be happy, and just as well together as only one at a time. Forsythe, oddly enough, never permitted himself to imagine a possible discovery of his amiable selfishness at that very breakfast-table; but he would have been a somewhat better informed man if Lord Bulleshue had done a little of his thinking aloud:

"That's the third time I've caught him. When a fellow's eyes light up like that, I know what's the matter. I know it's the way with mine, frequently.

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But I must look out, and not chaff him any more. It's quite likely I've prodded him hard, already."

Very likely, indeed; but it spoke well for his lordship's kind heart that he came to so humane a determination. The only question was how long he would be able to adhere to it, considering how much chaff he had in him.

There was no need of an apology to anybody for supposable defects in the Raynor turnout, and when the hour came for the horses of the house to perform their proud duty, Lord Bulleshue was compelled to confess that his second drive was at least equal to his first. As he said to Forsythe, afterward:

"That sort of thing doesn't fill you up, like your oysters. I could take another plate of it now. The horses are undeniable."

The fact was that Link Bishop himself had been called to the banker's aid in selecting the occupants of his stable, and so no mistake had been made.

No error whatever in his operations in horseflesh; but even while his wife and daughter were enjoying their fine drive and finer company, the head of the house was over head and ears in the consideration of mistakes of vast importance to him and them. Not any of his own making, of course, unless he had erred in trusting so large a risk in the hands of any one firm. Bounce & Co. had done so well by him, too, and the securities he had purchased through them, on speculation, had all gone up so splendidly!

But so had Bounce & Co., by reason of some mis-

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take, such as Wall Street men make at times, and Mr. Latimer Raynor's reading and contemplation, that morning, centred mainly upon a brief letter from them, dated the day before, and a briefer telegram of that same day and date.

"Compelled to sacrifice everything," he muttered. "I wonder where that will leave me. Not anywhere in particular, I fear."

He did not appear to be excited. On the contrary, his countenance wore an expression of increasing calm. Neither was he what is described as "stunned," so far as his outward man and action declared for him. There was quite enough left of him to face his disaster, and let no observer guess that it had come upon him. He was not at all stunned, but something within him was temporarily paralyzed, nevertheless, for the disaster had been great, and the blow sudden. Here was not his first great loss, whether or not his former adventures had been mistakes; but this last defeat swept away all the results of sundry desperately won successes, gambled for in order to cover an intended retreat. The question now remaining for him to decide was whether or not any retreat would be at all possible, and the answer he so thoughtfully worked out, was:

"Only by the prompt sacrifice of more than half I'm worth. I am glad Henderson has not returned. If he had I know what would follow. He'd be president of the bank in thirty days, and I would be upon the retired list."

A ghastly whiteness swept across his face, whiter than ought to come to the proudest features, on a

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mere suggestion of retirement from business; but his color came again, and his face settled in deep, hard, unyielding lines, such as might be supposed to stiffen on the death-awaiting features of the front rank in a "forlorn hope" at the foot of the fort's glacis. The "lost children" of a storming party, however, almost always have to look up, as they rush on, and Mr. Raynor was not looking up, physically or morally, however tensely his mental sinews might be hardening. The downward stare of his unwavering eyes looked a long way below the simple telegram before them, for in that brief moment he had inwardly determined:

"Not one dollar, till I am compelled to. I will put him in the boat, and he'll have to row with me. He won't dare to let me go down."

If he were speaking of the absent cashier he should have more carefully recalled the face of that gentleman. Mr. Henderson did not look as if there were many things he dare not do. Not a face his to be in any manner trifled with, present or absent, and likely to determine for itself how much or how little financial rowing it would do in any proposed compulsory boat.

Another mistake by Mr. Latimer Raynor, probably as bad as the trusting of too much money with Bounce & Co., just before the market and they went up so high. There is really no strength in paralysis of any kind. Not even when its only apparent effect is to deaden honor, and take away any painful sensitiveness to probing questions of right and wrong.

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Mr. Raynor did not come home at luncheon-time, and it was just as well, for his wife and daughter were not returned from their drive, and the great dining-room might have been lonely for him. When he did come, at the rigid correctness of six o'clock P.M., and met his guests at table, neither Forsythe nor Lord Bulleshue, any more than the ladies, was able to detect the change of a hair in their host's appearance or demeanor. His lordship, indeed, felt called upon to remark to his friend, at a fitting moment :

" It's really extraordinary, what culture one finds among the business men of this country. They are so remarkably well informed. Well bred, too, quite a number of those I've met."

" Mr. Raynor is a gentleman of education, and he has travelled a good deal."

" Evidently. Used his eyes, too. Do you know, I'm afraid if I knock around in the States much longer I shall become an observing man, myself ?"

" And write a book of travels ?"

" I'm afraid so. Put you all in, my boy."

" Do. I'll read the book."

" I think I could come out strong upon some things. Your best institutions are but little understood in the old country."

" For instance, Fourth of July ?"

" Perhaps. I'm afraid I'd get myself foundered if I did much guessing about politics. But your provisions, now—ladies—"

" Rural life. Horses—"

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"Any amount of things that need to be written up. By the way, I wonder when Henderson will get here. He promised me some woodcock shooting, and all that sort of thing."

Forsythe was as much in the dark as himself, and so was the train which brought Kemp Henderson into Daynton late that night.

After midnight, but the returning wanderer wore a marvellously bright and wide-awake air, as if he were well content with himself and quite willing to sit up, and feel so. He did not go out to the Henderson farm at so unseasonable an hour, but had his luggage taken to a hotel in town, went cheerily to bed and—no, not to sleep, for there was that upon his mind which required the remaining hours of the night to set it in order.

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CHAPTER XVI.

WALKING AND DRIVING.

THE broad, country road which ran past the old Henderson farmhouse was well kept, for all uses of hoofs and wheels. The fences, too, which bordered it were in excellent condition to protect the garden and the fields from stray cattle ; but the elms which overshadowed them, in long, patriarchal lines, had grown as they would. That was generally well and with exceeding grace and beauty, no aid of art being required by their kind ; but the narrow, irregular foot-path at their feet could have been vastly improved, for it was barely wide enough for one pair of feet, and was restricted by tall weeds and by here and there a straggling raspberry bush, in a manner to diminish, mournfully, its adaptation to the higher uses of a rural walk. No path so fairly shaded should ever be allowed to remain unfitted for the easy march of two-by-two. That is, of one by one, making two, side by side. There was no couple trying the wayside path, early that Saturday morning ; but two were standing side by side in the farmhouse doorway, under the fragrant honeysuckles which matted the arching trellis. An elderly lady and a young one, and on them and on the ample fields and orchards of the Henderson farm, the sun looked down as smilingly as on the

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freshly scrubbed decks of the sober-going *Hermetic*, so many hundreds of miles away. There was just the trace of a shadow in both places, other than those called into being by the sun. Something for him to begin with, no matter how many more he might cast. Here, in the doorway, however, the subject of thought and conversation was not any person who had recently gone away, but rather one who should be coming, and yet who came not.

"It is queer, Nelly. He ought to have been here yesterday."

"There is no use in waiting breakfast for him, Aunt Maud."

"Well, perhaps there ain't; but I'd kind o' counted on him. He's wonderfully partikler, too, about doing precisely what he says he will."

"Something may have happened—"

"Happened, Nelly? Now, I do hope there hasn't. It's awful, though, the way them railroads do run off the track, nowadays."

"Aunt Maud!"

"What, Nelly?"

"Isn't that somebody? Coming up the road on foot?"

"Kemp'd ha' hired somebody to bring him out. I do declare! Just let me see."

She was adjusting her gold-mounted spectacles—Kemp's own present—a trifle more advantageously upon her nose, and she must have hit the proper focus instantly, for she added:

"That's Kemp! I kind o' knowed he'd come."

She kept her spectacles bearing steadily upon

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him, but Nell vanished at once into the house. There was even a trace of vexation on the face she wore into the bright little dining-room, as if her thoughts were asking:

"I wonder if he saw me? He could not possibly imagine I'd be in any hurry to have him come back."

By no means, and the vigorous strides of Kemp Henderson, as he drew nearer the one roof in all the world which called him absolute owner, were only those of a strong young man who has had no breakfast, and wants one very much. Something to be added, of course, on account of the place to which he was coming for it. He was thinking of that, in fact, and was a good deal surprised to find how his healthy veins were warming toward that patch of earth and the quaint, white-walled homestead and the long rows of the elms.

"I don't believe Bulleshue cares more for his grand old manor-house, that he told about, than I do for that snug little farmhouse," thought Kemp.

Snug it was, but not so little as it looked, what with its low-roofed wings on either side and its long-backed rear addition. There was a good deal of ground covered, one way and another, and it was a house in which an immense amount of genuine living could be done by any people knowing how to do it.

There was something goodly and helpful to look upon in the usually dignified and self-containing face of Aunt Maud Henderson, when it beamed forth from under the honeysuckles upon her

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nephew. If she had been his mother instead of only his father's sister, she could hardly have testified greater affection in her greeting. It even looked as if she were somewhat oblivious of the years and changes which had passed upon him since she had darned for him the young trousers he had ruptured in that shrubby front dooryard.

"I declare, it does seem to me as if I didn't half know how glad I'd be to see ye! You're lookin' wonderful well, too. Do come in, now, and have some breakfast. You didn't git any in town, did ye?"

"No, indeed. Wanted to eat one with you. Where's Nelly? Is she well?"

"Doing finely. Always is. She's in there. Now, Kemp—"

"What is it, Aunt Maud?"

Her voice sank to a whisper:

"Her mother's away, and I ain't much company for her, and hardly anybody comes, and I've been thinking she's lonely. Just be kind o' polite to her, for my sake."

"Of course I will. Always was. A good deal more than she was to me. I'll be good."

"Do, now. It kind o' half way looks as if she was almost all alone, sometimes."

Dear Aunt Maud! It was well for Nell Davenport's pride that she did not know the source of an extra touch of heartiness which sounded in the greeting she received from Kemp, a moment later. Even as it was, and it may have been from the surprise of it, she did not quite meet him half way.

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The coffee and rolls were hot, however, and so was the broiled chicken, and Kemp's greeting to them also was a hearty one.

"Nelly always makes good coffee," remarked Aunt Maud.

"Capital. It's worth a three-mile walk to sit down to such a breakfast as this."

It was difficult to be otherwise than gracious, and Nell was compelled to come out, whether she would or no.

There were questions to be asked and answered, to and fro, as to the farm and its condition and crops, and as to the quiet life of its occupants; as to Kemp's summer wanderings and present purposes, the things he had seen and the people he had met; as to letters from the father and mother in Europe, and as to the time of their return; but not at any point did there crop out a breath of mention of Kemp's lost sister and her husband. That too, although Margaret's name was perpetually rising from heart to lip of the young man, his aunt, and even of Nell Davenport. It was as if just so many bubbles formed in a lower deep of their thought and memory, only to be broken and dissipated before reaching the smooth surface of verbal expression.

Breakfast over, and the talk turned of itself to the old homestead and its associations, and the feet of Kemp Henderson turned just as naturally toward the front yard which had been his old-time playground, and the other feet went with his as a matter of course.

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There was not a pair of them to compare in size or stride with those which had borne Lord Bulleshue away from the Raynor mansion in the rosy dawn of that very morning. He left his bed and room with a set purpose of keeping his promise to Link Bishop and the enjoyable black team, but also with a notion of performing full duty as a pedestrian before entering upon that of a subduer of restive horses.

His very early departure was something in the way of a nettle to the mind of his stately hostess and her fair daughter.

Neither of them had purposed, upon this morning any more than on the preceding, to really postpone their first cup of coffee until such an hour as might suit the aristocratic fast-breaking of their titled guest; but Katherine had added to her surreptitious cup and chop a little plan of her own for his lordship's benefit. It was a good plan, born of wise hospitality, and it brought her father's high-stepping bays to the front door, before the most stylish of buggies, only a few minutes before Robert returned from a scouting expedition to Lord Bulleshue's room, with the disquieting news:

"His boots is there, mum, but he's gone again."

"How vexatious!"

"My dear, we should have been up earlier."

"Mother, it is too bad! Anyhow I will have my drive, if I go alone."

There flashed across her mind, at that instant, a quick vision of awkwardness. Even of an accidental encounter with the stray Englishman during

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her lonely outing. It almost made her hesitate, and she walked slowly enough away from her finished first breakfast. How should she now procure a proper appetite for her second? Slow steps, of the kind which accompany deep thinking in men, and in women sometimes a disposition to pout at things; but they bore her to the front window, for a look at her elegant turnout, just in time for other footsteps, almost as leisurely, to come down the velvety stairs and through the drawing-room door behind her.

"Miss Raynor? So early?"

"Mr. Forsythe! What is to happen? Lord Bulleshue has gone for his walk."

"So I found. I'd meant to go with him; but he's gotten away from me. Ah! Did you think of taking a drive?"

It was as good as settled, the moment his eyes fell upon those horses, and Katherine's hat and shawl were donned with surprising quickness.

Lord Bulleshue might hardly have felt it as a compliment to himself if he had known how more than satisfied were both the occupants of Mr. Raynor's buggy with the fact that he had gone again so early.

Forsythe was a good whip, and if he had thought for a moment of chops and coffee before starting he forgot at once all things less gloriously delightful, the moment he found himself whirling along behind those bays, with that flushed, almost triumphant beauty at his side.

Katherine felt singularly grateful to him for com-

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ing down-stairs at so critical a moment, and the thought came into his own mind, thrillingly sweet:

"She knew he would go out. This thing was planned for me!"

Katherine would not have acknowledged any such thing, and it may not have been true before he made his appearance, but it was absolutely true now. There is no paradox in that, as is well known to any one who has been curious enough to trace back to their beginning, now and then, the subtle things we dimly describe as our "purposes." Half of them, or more, are nothing in the wide world but hopes and preferences when they are born, and we do but adopt them after they are big enough to crawl out of their cradles and walk around.

So Mrs. Raynor was left to await the appointed breakfast hour all by herself, and she spent a fair part of her well-fed vigil at the drawing-room window, in wondering if his lordship would really so far forget what was due to himself as to again take a seat at the side of that low fellow, Link Bishop.

"It would be careless, but then he does not understand, of course. And a man like 'im always does queer things when 'e's away from 'is own set. It would be dreadful if 'e should bring Link Bishop to the 'ouse."

There was small danger of Link being carried anywhere without his own free will; but he and his blacks carried Lord Bulleshue over a good deal of ground that morning. The latter had no manner of difficulty in finding his very well-known acquaintance, and it was odd of him that he should

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persist in asking the proper direction in the case from every man, woman, and child he happened to meet while he was doing up his health promenade. He even swung open the gate at Magoon's, and obtained his desired information before he reached the door. Not, indeed, from the merry, mocking lips of Polly Magoon, if that was what he went through the gate for, but from the leathery, stubby-bearded, pipe-carrying ones of her industrious sire.

"Bishop's place? Certainly, everybody knows him. I'm goin' right there myself. I'll show ye the way. I've got to take him a clevis for the new buggy he's been buyin'. Them blacks of his'n kicked thunder outen his other buggy, 'fore he'd owned it a week."

Poor Lord Bulleshue!

Not that he was compelled to walk by the side of so queer a man the rest of the way to Link's, but that his last chance for the use of his tongue was gone, the moment old Magoon came out again with his crooked bit of iron in his hand. Polly's father had never been known to cease talking while his feet were in motion, and Lord Bulleshue's remarks and queries were simply drowned, like so many superfluous conversational kittens.

Polly herself knew how it would be, and that may account for the fact that the last sound his lordship heard, before the old man began to walk, was a musical chuckle from just beyond the doorway.

"What can she be laughing at me for? Maybe it's the kind of pair we're making."

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There was a fair chance for at least a smile there, although the feeling of Mrs. Raynor, had she seen them side by side—the nobleman and the jack-of-all-trades—might have been rather one of horror than of mirth.

The blacks were in fine condition and really beginning to show the results of their sharp and judicious training. Discipline is a grand thing for horses as well as for men, and they had been getting it liberally. Still, there was quite enough equine devil left in them to make them interesting, and there was no lack of zest to the morning drive.

Link had the reins when they came down the road that led past the Henderson farm; but he could see other things than the backs of his horses, for he suddenly exclaimed:

"Got back, has he? Now Mr. Bleshew, there's a fellow I must pull up and speak to."

"Friend of yours, eh? Ah—I see. Ladies, too. I'm not in the least afraid."

"They won't hurt you. Miss Davenport's just splendid, and Kemp Henderson can handle a horse as well as I can."

"Henderson? Ah! Now, by Jove, if this doesn't beat the world."

The rate they were going at did all that was needed to complete the situation, and it was hardly half a minute from Link's first sight of the trio in that front yard, before, as the blacks were sharply pulled up, Lord Bulleshue sprang to the grass instead of sitting still to hold the horses. Not

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even the presence of the ladies prevented him from breaking out with :

"My dear boy, you're the very man I was thinking of."

"Lord Bulleshue? Good morning, Link, how are you?"

"Fine as a fiddle. Good morning, Miss Henderson. Morning, Nelly. Come and take a look at my new buggy. Guess I won't let 'em serve it the way they did the other."

Rapid introductions, only moderately formal, and a swift fire of talking, helped Link out of his surprise over the unexpected intimacy between his old neighbor and his new acquaintance.

Lord Bulleshue fairly captivated Aunt Maud, and he won a golden opinion from Nell, by the splendid courtesy of his manner to the old lady. Miss Maud Henderson would have died of mortification if her manner had shown it, then and there ; but so sudden an advent of a genuine, yellow-haired English lord had been a good deal for her to bear, so soon after breakfast, and she would have been flustered if it had not been for his extremely respectful behavior.

The frank, right-thinking Englishman, in fact, was responsible for the hearty, joyous, companionable tone the whole party fell into, including, apparently, even the black team. The latter were improving the time in recovering their wind for another sharp trot, when they cast their eyes up the road they were facing, and saw a buggy like their own and horses as good as themselves ap-

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proaching, at a gait which implied either haste or great need of exercise. If they had spoken a word about it to their inattentive reins-holder, Link Bishop might have been spared something of his second surprise for that morning.

Katherine Raynor knew every one of the assembly at the Henderson gate, and she was in just the humor to be as glad as she seemed at coming upon it. Her drive had been so immensely satisfactory, indeed, and her mother was three miles away. There was no apparent reason why she should not reply to Forsythe as she did when he exclaimed :

"I declare ! Bulleshue and Kemp Henderson."

"You met Mr. Henderson when you were here before ?"

"Yes, indeed. Capital fellow. A little young, that's all. Great friend of Bulleshue's. Been with us half the season."

"I've known him ever since he was a boy. His step-sister—do you know her ?"

"She may have forgotten me."

"I'll introduce you. Glad you know Mr. Henderson."

Then they were there, and she did her part to admiration, even to that of Lord Bulleshue, much as he was for the moment inclined to internal comments of an approving kind upon what he called "the unusual style, I declare, of Miss Davenport."

He had been compelled to admit, at once, that "for grace of action and for eye, and all that sort of thing, she's decidedly above the mark."

Katherine was a "beauty," and Nell was not ;

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but a curious sort of half-formed thought came into the mind of Kemp Henderson when he saw them speaking to one another, at the short range of half a dozen paces. It was not exactly that his step-sister was a credit to the family, although he had been proud of the way she had met Bulleshue; but there was something in her face, when she smiled back the exquisite smile of Katherine Raynor, that he could not understand, and yet could not forget.

It was not dislike, hardly even antagonism. Not till hours later did the words come to his inner ear, faintly and confusedly:

"There was pain in it, and it seemed to ask a question. I'm half sorry for Nell. I can hardly see a trace of her mother in her."

A merry morning party, but it was all shattered by a reckless remark of Link Bishop's about broiled chicken. Katherine could but be reminded that her guests were fasting, and she hardly needed to remind them. Both of them said they knew it, and before the subject could be dropped from sight or ridden away with, both of them had promised Kemp to breakfast with him at the farmhouse within a day or two.

"The woodcock, my boy?" anxiously inquired Lord Bulleshue.

"Surė to find some. Link and I have tramped for them, many a time. We must look up some dogs."

"I'll take care of all that," shouted Link. "I know a first-rate lot. Game's plenty, this season. Fishing good, too."

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A moment more, and the black team was contentedly trotting in the wake of the bays. Hard held, perhaps, but peaceable, as if they had heard and understood Lord Bulleshue's caution to himself.

"Mustn't put them in our dust, you know, my boy."

Link had given him the reins when he sprang in again, that he himself might deal undisturbed with the sudden dilemma:

"He's a lord, is he? Does a fellow work that kind of a handle to a man just the same as he would judge, or colonel, or guv'nor?"

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CHAPTER XVII.

OUT OF THE PAST.

MRS. HENDERSON did not make her appearance at the dinner-table of the *Hermetic*, that Saturday. It was too early in the voyage for passenger acquaintanceships to warrant particular inquiries, and the other cabin ladies were content, as a general thing, to account for the absence of any one of their number by a reference to the prevailing epidemic. One of them, indeed, made a nearer guess in Mrs. Henderson's case :

"Seasick? No, I think not. The funeral was too much for her. She must be a person of delicate sensibilities."

The shot was not a bull's-eye, but no one else came any nearer.

When tea-time came, and with it Mrs. Henderson, she brought no traces of illness upon her face, and the same sharp-eyed social markswoman fired at her again :

"Sick? Not a bit of it. She's been reading. If it's as good as that I'll borrow it when she's finished it. I forgot to bring a single novel with me."

So near was the second shot, and yet so far. Striking at the precise distance between a regularly written out and printed romance and one which has

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never been and never will be committed to paper. There is never anything in the printed ones which can successfully compare in interest with the strong points of their unpublished rivals.

Each successive hour since his morning service at the gangway had found the tall stranger from India less and less a stranger; but for some reason or other his company seemed to be less sought after. He was even looked at by sundry men and women as if there might be danger in him, and that was not altogether unaccountable.

Nobody ever dreams of avoiding your ordinary clergyman. He is the safest kind of company, and the most timid of cabin passengers feel all the more at home with him if they know that the rich spiritual fruit behind his white cravat has ripened into a "doctor of divinity." No soldier about him, you know, but a man of peace in a uniform of peace, and trebly peaceable upon a returning steamer and so near the end of his summer vacation. The instincts of society are unerring about such matters, and no one had mistaken Morrow for a clergyman. He was, they saw, felt, knew, a man of war, in a state of war, and who of them could guess what raids and forays, what sudden strokes of pitiless strategy, might even now be lurking in the depths of those cavernous eyes of his?

Something there was at the bottom of them, and it might be fire, and fire will burn.

It was a sort of fire, blazing, too, with enough of light to enable him to read pretty correctly the faces upon which he chose to focalize it—the focus

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invariably falling somewhat behind the outer face visible to other passengers.

He came and went, never hurriedly or with any apparent purpose, but never uncertainly or as if he did not know what to do with himself and his time. He found, in fact, so much to do, of one kind and another, that there was no difficulty in keeping out of his way. If Mrs. Henderson herself was trying to avoid him, she was in no need of protection from the door of her state-room or the close company of her very devoted second husband. As to the latter, indeed, she at last even protested against a too selfish absorption of his time and attentions, and sent him on deck to amuse himself otherwise. He went, and not unwillingly, ignorant that he thereby left his wife at the mercy of the ancient law governing action and reaction. It is a strong old law, and it works with special power between the opposite and opposing sexes. Action is hardly a featherweight more powerful than reaction, allowing for waste. Whether you be man or woman, if your pendulum-like swing away from your chosen "repulsion" has no further direct help from it, the inevitable reactionary force will swing you back again unerringly, if there are no specific barriers interposed to prevent your coming.

Therefore, and in obedience to law, within half an hour after Mr. Henderson's disappearance up the companion-way, a lady and a gentleman were standing face to face in the utter loneliness of the space under the great central chandelier of the cabin. There were tables in front of them, tables behind

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them, sofas and chairs in all directions; but there was not a living soul near enough to hear and interpret the subdued tones of their conversation.

"Did you know me, Roland?"

"From the first."

"It did not come to me at first. Little by little. Then, this morning, it came all at once."

"It is thirty years, Mrs. Henderson. I am well aware that I have changed."

"You are not old."

"Not at all. I shall be young enough in a few days."

"When you see your old home. When you reach your own country once more."

"Exactly. When I reach my own country, and see my home."

"Do you suppose the house is there yet? I have not visited in that neighborhood for years."

"I hope you will, some day. But my house is standing, all ready for me—all furnished. There will be no fault to find with it when I see it."

"Ah, I see! You sent over, and had it prepared for you. You will have your family with you? Did they come over in advance of you?"

"They are there—those I have seen and those I have not seen. No, I did not have much to do with it; but I am as sure it is all right as Paul himself was, and for the same reason. One of the last things the Lord said was about the houses he meant to get ready for us. He went on purpose to see about them."

"Roland Morrow!"

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All that could be seen by the light of the chandelier was the gorgeous cabin of the steamer, with its lavish upholstery and its groups of human beings. That was interesting, but those two, as they stood and looked so earnestly upon each other, were gazing inwardly upon a very different place and other persons.

That other scene, which momentarily so absorbed them, was invisible to the lounging groups of the cabin; but it also was very interesting, and it was wonderfully vivid.

Those two not only saw but heard.

A very pretty young woman and a tall, earnest-faced, but somewhat ungainly young man, stood fronting one another in the vine-shadowed porch of a white-walled farmhouse, and the flood of moonlight falling upon them answered for the hour of the meeting.

He was gazing intently, wistfully, into her half-averted face, and there was a strong quiver of suffering upon his lips as he huskily said:

"Is that your answer, Marian? Must I give up you or Him?"

"No, Roland, no! I did not say that. Only that I could not be a minister's wife. I know too well what their lives are."

"I am called—"

"I am not. I do not believe you are. You have a splendid career opening before you in your profession. Everybody says so. Judge Ovington told father he did not know a more promising young lawyer. For my sake, Roland!"

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"He said we must give up all, and follow Him. That is what I have made up my mind to do."

She leaned toward him till the moonlight fell more definingly upon her upturned brow, and there was a pleading look in her eyes and even a trace of some internal struggle upon her rosy lips; but these latter were in a manner hardening, and the young man did not press his own upon them.

"Roland!"

A spasm went sharply through his tall, well-knit frame—the shudder caused by the snapping of something—and the light in his eyes grew so brilliant that she shrank from it, as he said:

"No, Marian. I have been listening, and I have heard Him call again. I must go."

No more was seen or heard, for it was as if a curtain fell across the past, right there, and the steamer's cabin was once more visible to the white-haired, soldierly man and to Mr. Henderson's handsome second wife. His answer, now spoken, was not altogether to the last exclamation she now had uttered vocally. It sounded more like a final comment on that pictured memory:

"I have not seen you from that hour, Marian, until I met you on the deck."

"Have you been a minister all these years?"

"For twenty of them a missionary."

"Indeed! where?"

"India. Travelling part of the time, but for most of it at Bunjoor in Hyderabad."

She may or may not have been comparing the life she herself had so wisely chosen, and won, with

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what it would have been as a missionary's wife in Hyderabad; but her next question sounded half-way formal and commonplace:

"Have you made many converts?"

"I have made a good fight on the skirmish line. I have obeyed the orders of my Captain."

Splendidly like a good soldier he looked, as he spoke; but there was again something mercantile and calculating in her query:

"But the fruits? Has there been anything to pay you for such a sacrifice? You must have kept some count of them—of your converts."

"So far as I have been permitted to surely know —not one."

"Twenty years, and not one convert? Do you think, then, that your life and work have been a failure?"

"He who sent me never made a failure. His work is a warfare, and He is victor always. He was never at any time defeated, not even for a moment. He was never in danger of defeat."

"But not one convert!"

"I am going home in triumph, now my work is done, Mrs. Henderson."

"I should not think you could bear to leave your field without some sheaves."

"He has called me from if Himself. He has doubtless more work for me in another place."

"In the neighborhood of Daynton?"

"How can I guess? I have not dwelt upon it specially. He said we become exactly like the other angels, and that they are all ministering

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spirits. I do not know anything beyond that. He may send me to Daynton, or He may send me to India. I shall be very glad to go in either case."

"But it is so sad not to see any results, after all."

She paused there; and well she might, considering what had been a part of the sacrifice she was referring to; but he cheerily responded:

"The sun shines all winter, no matter how hard the frost holds. So He has been shining. It is nearly spring now."

"What do you mean by that?"

It was a change of the subject, at least in so far as it took the discussion away from himself and his own work, and it was a welcome relief to Mrs. Henderson.

"What do I mean? Only that men who are watching, as I have been, see more than do those who are not watching. I have no converts to number; but I have seen a race, races, tribes, millions, change before my eyes, as the increasing light and heat of the new day poured in upon them. It is just so everywhere. The world I am leaving hardly resembles the world I was born into. There are swelling buds on every branch of every tree, and many of the thorns, and briers, and poisonous vines are winter-killed, and even their roots will die when the full heat of summer comes, a few years hence."

She strove hard to understand him; but it was all too far away from any kind of thinking she had ever been accustomed to.

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She was a Christian, when she was at home, and a very busy, exemplary church-member, and she knew a good sermon as absolutely as she knew the quality of any other kind of warp and woof; but here was something new.

That is, if she had but known it, a thing not so new as rare, even a man who had for twenty years and more taken God at His word, and who was quite willing to continue doing so, and was not afraid to declare it. A man who actually believed God to be living, and acting, and working changes on earth and about to work more. A man to whom the resurrection and the other life seemed to be realities instead of phantasms.

What might have been the effect upon her it were hard to say, if it had not been for the assistance which came to her. It came in the form of a word she had heard in a remarkably good sermon, and it fitted her present need exactly, for she said to herself:

"I see. He is a mystic!"

And then she felt easier, and ceased trying to understand him. She could go on, now, and ask about India and heathen generally, and she said quite a number of pious things about herself and about the church in Daynton, and what she called "the work" in the United States and in all the world.

And Roland Morrow listened, and said strange things and some that sounded more than half wicked, and the light in his eyes grew brighter at times and then dim and sorrowful; and after a while

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others joined them, and in a few minutes after that he in a manner disappeared.

Nobody followed him, and before long he might have been seen on deck near the stern of the ship, gazing out upon the rippling phosphorescence she left behind her, and there was no one near enough to trouble him with questions or remarks.

No, not one, but there came a living thing, nevertheless, out of the unseen and void expanse, and it swept on toward him, less and less ghostlike, till it all but touched the ship, and swerved gracefully away to leeward at the very level of the sea.

"There is no more beautiful bird than the albatross, to me," muttered Roland Morrow; "but I never before saw so much of meaning in a pair of wide, white wings. It is not far away, now; but they are again almost invisible. How much more plainly we shall see all things when the Sun rises and the Day is here."

He did not know it; but his departure from the growing circle under the chandelier in the cabin had removed a strange and all but painful sense of oppression from a part of it. Mrs. Henderson herself felt better, now he had gone; but she was more than usually silent. Again and again, and whenever she closed her eyes for a moment, came back to her the vision of the farmhouse porch and the sound of the young man's voice.

That had been the turning-point of her life, she knew, and of his, and from it would diverge to all eternity the paths in life they each had then chosen. She knew what hers had been, for all those years

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of it, and she shuddered to think of his, and its long, weary, painful failure, and of what would have been her own, running a wife's parallel to it. She had been so wisely firm in that hour of her trial, and he had so obstinately thrown himself away. So far, well. Wonderfully well. But something he had said, or all he had said, compelled her mental eyes to strain themselves a little further along the course of those diverging paths.

Her own went right on, bright, successful, year after year, in wealth, prosperity, comfort; in a great increase of religious zeal upon which she found herself resolved; she knew not, did not guess how many there were to be of the happy years of that well-rewarded life, but then it seemed to vanish. Curtain, or cloud, or mist, or the failure of her anticipatory vision—at all events there was a place beyond which she saw nothing, and it made her try and remember a number of texts from the Bible. They did not come to her memory satisfactorily, and she inwardly turned once more to the sad, sweet duty of pitying Roland Morrow and his wasted life.

So white-haired, worn, fatigued, he looked, emerging from his twenty years of failure, with no path at all before him. Not one thing in the wide world to look forward to—such as she had in such abundance—and she sighed as she looked, for he had clearly given her to understand that he did not expect to live long. That was where her great surprise came to her, like a flash; for it was as if she were looking, at that moment, with his own eyes,

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and cloud or mist, or curtain, or any failure or uncertainty of sight there was none whatever, and she drew away as if she had been frightened, with a strange feeling at her heart that she had somehow lost or missed something.

The next day was Sunday.

There were many minutes of difference between the time of its coming to the wide-awake steersman of the *Hermetic* and the loudest-voiced of the chanticleers of Daynton and its vicinity, for days have less to do with actual time than is commonly supposed. Almost as little as time has to do with actual duration, and that is little enough.

The officers of the ship on duty took their morning exercise to and fro along the well-scrubbed deck, or at their posts by turns upon the bridge, and Lord Bulleshue took his, for the first time, altogether on foot, returning with a fine appetite for his breakfast and quite another appetite whereof no one could reasonably have suspected him.

He was prepared to go to church with his host and hostess, and he said so, very frankly, much to the gratification of the latter and her daughter, especially as Carlton Forsythe proposed to add himself to the distinguished party which was to honor the morning service in the Raynor pew.

Mrs. Raynor retained, to something more than its fulness, the religious persuasion she had imported from her English birthplace, and she had carefully educated her husband and daughter in the same faith, as was her duty.

She felt now, in every inch of her corporeal and

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mental existence, that it would do a world of good, both to her shepherd and his flock, to hear the sonorous voice of such an English lord as she had captured joining in the rounded responses of the grand old liturgy his fathers had defended for them. She was by no means in error, for she was dealing with an attractive life picture of that union of church and state in which so large a majority of mankind believe—including myriads of those whose protest against it is little more than a rebellion against the union of their state with any other than their church.

It was "church work" she was doing, and she knew how lovely Katherine would look, and how well she herself would appear, sandwiched for devotional purposes with Carlton Forsythe and Lord Bulleshue.

It was everything that was lovely until his lordship himself announced his unheard-of vagary:

"I'll not go home without seeing some of your dissenters, you know. I've been reading about them. They're not at all what they are with us."

"They are numerous," faintly remarked Mrs. Raynor.

"Exactly. I've never been to chapel in my life. May I beg a favor? Do, now, take me to the biggest you have. This very evening. There was a very large affair pointed out to me this morning."

"Somebody spoke to you about it?" said Mr. Raynor, opening his eyes.

"No, indeed. That is, not till I spoke to him.

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He told me the names of a dozen; but they've escaped me. An elderly man he was."

"An American?"

"Rather an African, I should say, and he gave the darkest kind of an account of the state of true religion in Daynton."

"Why, what did he say?"

"A good deal. You see, I put my foot in it. Offended him by asking if he were a Parsee."

"A Parsee?" said Katherine.

"No, sah!" said he. "I's a Baptis', I is, ob de right sort. Dah ain't much religion in dis yer town. Dey's all gibben ober to de worl' an' de debbil, dey is."

Lord Bulleshue was not a bad mimic, and he gave them the full benefit of his morning's experience.

"I'd give something," said the Englishman, "to attend a meeting of the colored brethren."

"Have to go south for that," said Forsythe. "There's nothing else just like it in all the world; but I suppose it answers the purpose of religion to them."

"No doubt," said Mr. Raynor.

"I suppose it does," added his wife.

There was a general expression of assent, and not a soul at that breakfast-table perceived how broad and biting was the sarcasm of the commonplace thing they were saying. They were but voicing their own somewhat vague perception of the fact that the varying "exercises which answer the purposes of religion," to different worshipping as-

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semblies, to different mental developments, are essentially alike in nature and use. All that makes the "exercises" differ being visible and external.

There are few other influences more powerful than a proper sense of the overwhelming duty of hospitality, and Lord Bulleshue's outrageous proposal met with no direct opposition. Whatever sin there may have been in yielding to it was much more than atoned for by the good work of the morning; and Mrs. Raynor's anticipations of the effect to be produced by the filling of her pew as it was filled that day were more than realized.

It was a good and well-spent Sunday morning in Daynton; but there were defects of management on board the *Hermetic*.

The three Romanist fathers were out of the question, so far as worship in the cabin was concerned. To do them justice, they had already hunted up the sheep of their own flock who were on board, for that priesthood is not a sluggish one, nowadays, and the taller of those three was one of its aggressive spirits.

Mr. Henderson himself had obtained from the captain the accustomed courteous assent to the proposition to hold religious services in the cabin, and the name of Mr. Morrow as a proper person to conduct them had followed, almost as a matter of course.

"I only regret," added the polite Frenchman, "that he probably will not preach in French. He speaks it perfectly; but I do not understand English quite well enough."

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Better, no doubt, than Deacon Henderson understood the kindly, old sailor's French, but there was to be no morning service. When Roland Morrow was sought for, and found, he almost curtly responded that he should have no time for work of that sort until later in the day.

"But may we count upon you then? It will really be a good opportunity for you."

"So it will. You may expect me. I have a good deal to do in the steerage, this morning."

Only a few minutes after that, a good lady in a flounced silk remarked upon Mr. Henderson's report, half disdainfully:

"Of course. He is so accustomed to working among heathen, I fear he will hardly know how to preach to us."

"Just as if we were heathen, probably," added an older lady, with more flounces and with a very large diamond in one of her finger-rings.

Heathen they may have been, the emigrant children who gathered around Roland Morrow, all that morning, and who listened to him with such intensity of interest. Wherever he had learned the art of winning the little ones, he had learned it well, and the tall priest pointed it out half enviously to his two companions, adding:

"Now you will see the women follow the children, and the men will follow them."

"Perhaps not."

"Surely. As sure as womanhood follows girlhood, and a boy becomes a man."

His remark had some depth in it, and he was

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looking beyond the steerage of the *Hermetic;* but it was practically true there. There was no preaching done to the children, and only a little singing by them; but one of the seamen walked aft among his mates from a few moments of close observation of what Roland Morrow was doing, with:

"Look a' here, boys, if I don't just wish that there mish'n'ry chap had kept out of this ship. I don't want to sail with no feller aboard that don't belong to this earth."

"Wall, wot's he been up to?"

"Nothin' partikler; but it's the looks of him when he's a slippin' off a prayer. It's no good, now I tell ye."

Such was not the prevailing opinion in the steerage, and one little fellow cried vigorously at the final necessity for being put down from Roland Morrow's knee.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

IMPORTANT SERVICES.

THE departure of the von Rahm family, in a carriage, accompanied by so remarkably fine a gentleman, and themselves all looking so unusually well, had been quite an event at the tenement-house. It had required one full day, night included, to discuss the probabilities of their return; but popular doubts upon that point gradually gave place to a general feeling of security. Still, it must be confessed that what is called the "courage of their convictions" came slowly indeed to some of the occupants of the lower floors. It was not until Sunday morning that a pair of middle-aged ladies from that part of the hive arrived at the conclusion that it was time for them to make a visit of ceremony to the back pair of rooms at the top of the house. They slipped along, quite unostentatiously, up one flight of stairs after another, till they stood in front of the door which Margaret had so often opened with the trembling fingers of disappointment.

"What wud ye say, Mrs. McGovern, ave they'd coom back?"

"An' shud she opin the dure in me face? Troth an' I'd ask was it the small-pox was ailin' one of the childher."

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"That wud do foinely. I'll knock."

It was a good, loud knock, from knuckles which could have dented the pine with small harm to themselves; but it brought no answering feet to the threshold.

"Thry the dure—"

"Begorra, it's not boolted—"

Another moment, and they were eagerly staring around the deserted nest of the von Rahms.

"Saints preserve us! Was it nothin' at all they had to live wid? What did they slape on?"

"Ye're an owld fule, Mrs. McGovern."

"Take that same to yersilf, thin, and what do you mane?"

"There's thim in the house could tell ye how these rooms kem to be impty. We're too late, that's all."

That was all. Margaret's nearer neighbors had done their whole duty, and the bare wall testified mutely how thoroughly well the looting of those rooms had been attended to. A British army in a Chinese palace could not have exhibited in greater perfection the last results of civilized military training than had these untrained, undisciplined forces of the New York tenement-house.

"Let's make thracks out o' this, Mrs. McGovern, before we have the whole flure out a laughin' at us."

"Dade an' its little I care to sthay in a place loike this, wid imptiness lukin' me in the face."

An idea somewhat distantly related to Mrs. McGovern's was at that moment finding expression

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on the lips of Margaret von Rahm, as she replied to a remark of her husband's.

"See it again? Not for anything. I would not climb those stairs for a hundred times the value of anything we left behind us."

No word of dissent responded, and Kaiser was at that juncture enjoying an uncommonly fine pull at his father's mustaches. He and Lena and their mother could still recognize him as the same man who had lain upon the ugly couch at the tenement-house; but anybody less lovingly familiar with his manly features would have been compelled to look at least twice. The change was something wonderful, and his step was even firm and steady when he arose, and walked across the room. A few days more of similar improvement, and he would be quite ready for work.

"Margaret?"

"What is it, Wilhelm?"

"It's a strange thing for me to say. I hate a priest as badly as ever; but if I were just a little stronger I believe I'd go to church with you to-day."

"I thought of it. It seems as if I had not been inside of one for years."

"Go! go! It will do you good. I will take care of the children. You believe in it, if I do not. It's my idea we ought to be thankful to somebody, and your brother isn't here. I can't wonder at a man imagining a God, feeling as I do to-day. It's a perfectly natural mental operation. I shall burst if I do not thank somebody."

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"I will go, indeed!"

They were by no means bad people, after all, when their natural mental operations could take so healthy a direction. So Margaret went to church, selecting one at random, and keeping her head down a remarkably long time after she had reached a pew, while her husband stayed at home, and played with Lena and Kaiser, and fairly surrendered himself to the business of imagining a God who could, and would, and occasionally did come to the help of human beings in their hour of utter need.

So all the earlier hours of that Sunday went by, on land and sea; but evening service on board the *Hermetic* came earlier than was provided for by the schedule time of any church in Daynton.

The biggest of these, in accordance with the demand of Lord Bulleshue, had been selected for the religious adventure of the Raynors and their guests.

It was a large structure, indeed, its size having been determined by two unerring measures. The cash collectable for building purposes might be said to have determined the cost of the lot and the width of the front, while credit, in various forms of time subscriptions, verbal promises, and a mortgage, had given the proportions as to depth, height, steeple, and the kind of ornamentation called "finish."

Lord Bulleshue gazed around him upon the latter, quite liberally, during the services, and afterward declared that he had learned a very important

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lesson concerning one feature of American life. He may or may not have learned the right lesson from it all; but he added:

"One of those things I came over to find out, you know. I must say I never saw a more orderly set, and the sermon was remarkable. I actually listened to it all, I did."

Well for him if he had, and would remember it; for the preacher of the evening was one of the most capable men of a great and active communion, and was preaching what he believed to be the truth. Everybody in the crowded house had to listen, and they all felt that it was a grand discourse, and they said so to one another, as they squeezed down the aisles to the doors at the end of it all, and there was nobody there to tell them that no two of them had heard the same sermon. Some, truly, had listened to one, so poor and small that there was almost room for it to be stowed away in their poor, small souls.

The large church in Daynton was waiting, open-mouthed, for its first arrival, when the choice little flock in the cabin of the *Hermetic* escaped from the hands of their white-haired shepherd.

Not a passenger had been missing from the assembly, the three priests excepted, and several of the ship's officers and crew were also present; for not only was there a strong feeling of curiosity concerning the missionary from India, but it was so undeniably the correct thing to be pious on Sunday at sea. There might be rough weather ahead, and it would not do to neglect any means of propitiating

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that Providence which sometimes makes such terrible uses of rough weather.

The cabin answered well many of the uses of an ordinary meeting-house. The restricted club idea of such places was carried out to perfection, with the single exception of the absence of pews and other boundary marks of private property. Still, all who had sittings were regularly entitled to them, and had purchased their tickets to such doctrine as might there be dispensed. A more respectable and exclusive apparatus for hearing the gospel could hardly be imagined. There stood Roland Morrow, behind the small table at the forward end of the cabin, and there was something more soldierly than ever in his erect, commanding presence. No wonder the dying communist addressed him as a general. And yet the most careless of his hearers was conscious of an increasing feeling that to listen to such a man at such a time was a good and meritorious action.

It was just as some of them had feared, however; and if they had been heathen of Hyderabad he could not have more completely taken it for granted that they were ignorant of the first rudiments of the faith he was expounding. He talked to them, ornaments of society and highly developed products of Christian civilization, as if this life and the life after death were alike new ideas to them. That was by no means the worst of it; for he had not talked ten minutes before a fair majority of the *Hermetic's* cabin passengers began to feel, most uncomfortably, that the flashing-eyed missionary's

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estimate of their spiritual condition was measurably correct. It was impertinence on his part, to be sure; but when or where had he discovered that they had never heard the doctrine of the resurrection? And now, on a ship, a thousand miles from land—a ship that might sink, too—to be told that if that ship should go down they would all have an immediate practical illustration of the truth he was explaining. They had already had a tolerably good one, he said, since they left port, and he did not seem capable of appreciating their feelings on the subject. How could a man of any real sensibility discourse of such horrors as death and heaven with so calm a smile upon his face?

Mrs. Henderson afterward told her husband that she actually hugged herself for fear her body would get away from her.

"So it will, some day, my pet," almost gruffly returned the burly cashier; for he, too, had been listening, and had been one of those who had courage enough to squarely face the preacher's reasoning.

"It is so dreadful—"

"Why, no, it isn't. I like the way he puts it. He's a grand fellow. Talks what he believes right out like a man."

There was no lack of pluck in the Henderson blood, and Kemp's energetic father had never flinched anything in his life.

The cabin congregation could but hold together to the end, under the circumstances; for their chosen missionary had them at his mercy, and they

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all sat it out. If it did them good in various degrees, that was only the fate of all religious services and all assemblies of worshippers. When it was over, and Roland Morrow disappeared through the door of his own state-room, those of them who chose were at liberty to comment upon the bad taste he had shown in the selection of his topic and the manifest materialism of his views.

He had indeed been grossly materialistic ; for he had treated the other world, throughout, as a positive and tangible reality, and not at all as an orthodox, ecstatic mist, beautifully peopled with human birds in the perpetual performance of difficult religious music.

"I wish Kemp could have heard that sermon," remarked Mr. Henderson to his wife. "I must stir him up when we get home."

"Do you know," she replied, sweetly, "I am sure Nelly would really have enjoyed it? She is the strangest girl in some of her notions. She reads, too."

"'Twon't hurt her. Wish I'd read more myself. Mean to. I declare, that fellow has set me a thinking. I sha'n't sleep a wink to-night."

Nelly's mother was in no such peril, and was quite able to send her own thoughts away to the farmhouse near Daynton, where she might suppose her daughter to be spending the quiet hours of that Sunday evening.

Nell was there, but not in the sitting-room or in the vine-clad porch ; for she had found an excuse for seeking the retirement of her own

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chamber, and Kemp and Aunt Maud had the rest of the house to themselves. It was their first opportunity for a long, uninterrupted, private talk, and they had one, sitting there by the open window of the snug parlor. Aunt Maud's part of the conversation was largely exclamatory and interjectional; for Kemp's full account of his summer wanderings led rapidly to his search in the great city for his lost sister and its final, unlooked-for success.

Just there came in a long silence that covered Aunt Maud like a cloak, till Kemp's account landed his prizes in their new home. Not but that she found strength to polish her spectacles, and draw wonderfully long breaths in regular succession; but at the end of it she tried hard to say:

"Thank the Lord!"

And when she found she could not as much as speak those three short words she gave it up, and sobbed like a child.

"Now, Aunt Maud, don't cry just yet. There's more to tell. I did not stop there."

The story went right on through the scene at the banking-house.

"I feel sure," he said, "that I shall hear from them in a day or two, and then Margaret and her husband will be all right."

"I do so want to see her and those children!"

"Fine ones, both of them. It's a grand thing to be an uncle."

"I must tell Nelly—"

"Aunt Maud—"

"She ought to know—"

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"Not just yet, then. It was Margaret's especial request that her secret should be kept until von Rahm is settled in some business. It's only fair to her."

"I don't see why."

"Don't you, now? Think of what happened before she went away. If you were in her place, would you want any pity from Nell or her mother? Isn't it quite enough to have you and me know what she's been through? You and I must keep her secret for her. You've plenty of pride of your own, Aunt Maud."

"Indeed I have not, then; but I can understand how she feels about it. You've done just what a good brother ought to do, Kemp Henderson, my dear boy."

"Well, I've tried to; but it won't be half done if I don't respect Margaret's feelings."

"I won't say a word. Only I wish I could—"

She almost bit her tongue at that point, as if she were suddenly on the edge of saying something she ought not, and she at once began to ask further questions about Lena and Kaiser.

Kemp's own plans for the future were quite lost sight of in the process of getting acquainted with Margaret's children, and these were barely put away in their conversational beds when Nell Davenport at last came down-stairs.

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CHAPTER XIX.

A GOOD DEAL OF BUSINESS.

LINK BISHOP was astir as early as usual on Monday morning; but no Lord Bulleshue came to join him in his horse-training. Katherine Raynor and her mother had succeeded in providing other amusement for their guest.

Instead of the jolly Englishman, however, and every bit as promptly in point of time, arrived Kemp Henderson himself, and Link was very glad to see him.

"Come on, Kemp, I'm getting these blacks down to their work. They've given me enough."

"All right, but I came over on business."

"Horse business?"

"That's it. Must have something to run around with. Nothing in our stable but plough horses."

"Got just the thing for you. Prettiest kind of a sorrei mare. Three quarters Morgan. Trot inside of three minutes. Jack, get out the sorrel, and rub her down. Have her all ready when Mr. Henderson and I get back. Come, Kemp, jump in."

Kemp was willng enough, and the blacks appeared to be in an excellent frame of mind. They trotted their best, as squarely as a pair of old stagers, and gave their master the free use of his time to talk with his friend. It was kind of them;

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for there was an immense deal of talking to be done.

It began on dogs and woodcock, and moved rapidly to and through a list of topics which included snipe, quail, partridges, squirrels, coon hunting, trout fishing, trolling for pickerel, and the races at the county fair, which would not come off in time to do Lord Bulleshue any good.

"Glad you like him," said Kemp.

"Like him? He's a trump. No nonsense or airs about him!"

Then followed, of course, a graphic account of the manner of the birth of Link's acquaintance with the titled foreigner, and that drew on to a discussion of the several human beings, male and female, whose fate had made them subsequent incidents of that acquaintanceship. Kemp was quite willing to have Link run on as he did; for nothing could be more free or more frankly descriptive than the use he was making of his tongue.

"Miss Raynor? Well, now, she is a beauty and no mistake. Prettier than Polly Magoon, and that's saying something. I don't take much stock in her, though. That Raynor blood's got a freeze in it somewhere. Tell you what, Kemp, she don't compare with Nelly Davenport."

Kemp winced perceptibly; but he made no remark worth recording, and Link had it all his own way while he described her incomparable pluck and coolness during his first fight with the black team.

"Ain't another girl in the county would have

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faced the music as she did. I don't say I more'n half understand her, either. She's deep, she is. I've known her since she was knee-high, and she was always a kind of a puzzle. Somehow or other, though, I don't reckon she's much puzzled about other people. Them eyes of her'n kind o' look right through ye."

The thought in Kemp's mind at that moment was curiously warm with the question whether or not Nell Davenport had been looking him through, and, if so, what had she discovered. He was keeping a family secret from her, and that may have been one reason why he felt so uncomfortable when he recalled the expression of her eyes; for he had noted it as keenly as had Link himself. He could not assure his pride that it had been an expression of admiration.

They were back at the stable in good time for a look at the sorrel mare, and she certainly appeared to justify the encomiums of her owner, so far as outward appearance went.

"What's the figure, Link?"

"Dog cheap, to you, Kemp. The fact is the market's overstocked, and I've too many on hand. I'll send her over, and you can drive her around for a day or two. Gentle as a kitten. If you don't say she's worth three hundred, after you've tried her, you can send her home."

"I'll take your word for it, old fellow. Pay you now, if you say so."

"No, I guess not. Maybe you'll find some fault with her. We've been too good friends to do

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much hoss-tradin'. It ain't a safe thing, you know."

"Well, I s'pose not. No man ever had a very good opinion of the fellow he'd swapped with twice."

Two very hearty laughs accompanied that piece of up-country wisdom; but there was enough truth in it to keep Kemp's hand out of his pocket until he should make full trial of the sorrel.

She was at his own door before he had finished his breakfast, and he had already received a hint from Aunt Maud.

"It's ever so long since Nell's been to town. I know she wants to do some shopping. So do I, but she'd better go first. Are you sure Link sold you a safe horse? Some of his are awful skittish."

That was why Kemp said, as he arose from the table:

"Now, Nell, if you will get ready, while I am seeing about my buggy, I'll drive you to Daynton."

"Won't I be in your way?"

"Not at all. I've business at the bank and some errands to do. Give you as much time as you want."

There was no earthly reason why she should not take advantage of such an offer. Kemp strode away to the stable, and by the time the pretty sorrel was harnessed for her new service Nell was at the door waiting.

"Now, Nelly," said Aunt Maud, "do be civil to Kemp. There's a great deal of good in him, if you'd only take pains to find it out."

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"Why, don't I treat him well? I'm sure I do. But he's been away so much, and he changes so. I almost feel as if he were a new acquaintance, whenever he comes home."

Nell was not old enough to know how much truth she was uttering, or how entirely "new acquaintances" young men get to be, between one time and another, not in one case only, but in all. Sometimes the new man is a better one than the old, and sometimes he is not as good, and it is not always easy to tell which is true, immediately after he gets into the house.

Kemp drove around in front of the gate, and he had to confess that his step-sister looked well, standing in the porch. She did not fill it with bloom, and style, and beauty, however, as Katherine Raynor would have done, and he felt a twinge he could not account for, at the thought of Katherine in that porch, with the honeysuckles drooping around her as they now were around Nell Davenport. She had been glad of her few minutes of waiting in the doorway; for she had but just come out of a small struggle with herself, in the retirement of her own room. She had accepted Kemp's invitation because it would have been rude to refuse, and because she very much needed to visit Daynton and its well-filled shops; but a strong feeling of repugnance grew within her as she went up-stairs.

"What would he say," she was thinking, "if he knew how I feel about him? Would he have invited me?"

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Kemp thought he knew, and yet he had invited her. He may have even exaggerated her dislike for him ; but he would have driven her to town, for Aunt Maud, if she had hated the ground he walked on.

Nelly could not know that, and she came very near to calling herself a hypocrite, while she was tying her bonnet-strings.

" It is too bad," she thought, again. " He seems so manly, and he is so carefully polite to everybody. But who could help despising such heartless slavery to the world? His own sister! His only sister! If a brother of mine married a scrub-woman he would be my brother for all that."

Her color rose a little, but it went down again, and when she saw him spring from his buggy, and hold open the gate for her, an expression of doubt swept across her face, and her manner was almost gracious as she permitted him to help her to her place.

Kemp Henderson did not look a bit like a sneak or a slave that morning, and all women have instincts concerning men. What if Aunt Maud were right, and a great deal of good was in him, after all?

The conduct of the gay-spirited little sorrel mare had nothing in it to remind Nell of the black span, and her speed was at least equal to theirs. It was a fine drive to Daynton, and Nell was fairly compelled to enjoy it. She even found herself asking questions about Lord Bulleshue and Carlton Forsythe, and then she was sorry ; for she knew

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she must have reminded him that they were in the same house with Katherine Raynor. If Kemp dreamed that his hot-hearted questions relating to that problem had not been guessed at by others he was mistaken ; for Nell had heard, and Nell had seen, and she had been at the gate with him when Forsythe and Katherine drove up together.

Kemp was good company ; but he did not volunteer to attend Nell Davenport upon her round of shopping. He knew better than that, and had business of his own besides. Enough to keep him out of mischief, he said, until she could buy all the calico she needed.

So the sorrel was securely cared for, and the two went their ways.

Kemp's first visit was to the bank, and Mr. Latimer Raynor was half surprised that it did not comprise a request for cash advances. That was odd, considering where the young man had been and what he had been doing ; but the bank president's manner was none the less gracious. He even strove not to be too condescending, and at last went so far as to say :

" Mrs. Raynor tells me you are well acquainted with Lord Bulleshue and Mr. Forsythe."

" Splendid fellows."

" Can you not join us at dinner, to-day ? Six o'clock, sharp."

" Thanks. That will give me plenty of time. I've been making arrangements for their benefit. Shooting, fishing, and so forth."

" Capital. Glad to hear it. I'm no sportsman.

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They can't be expected to spend all their time with the ladies."

"Plenty for them to do. They've guns and tackle of their own, except for some things. I'll find the rest, and I've made sure of some prime dogs."

Mr. Raynor's notion of the higher uses of the dog family were somewhat dim. He knew that they were not cut up and made into bait, but that was about all, and his gratified commendation meant very little more than an expression of his joy at having a good excuse to give his wife for asking Kemp Henderson to dinner.

The young man went about his other business, and the banker once more bent a furrowed and clouded brow over a pile of papers on the table before him. It was not a pleasant day in the private parlor of the First National Bank of Daynton.

Kemp gave Nell Davenport all the time he thought she ought to need and a little more. The consequence was that when he reached their appointed rendezvous, at the forward counter of a well-known dry-goods establishment, she was waiting for him. She would not have had him wait for her, that morning, for the prettiest bonnet in Daynton.

On their way home he told her of his dinner engagement, and of his purpose of having Bulleshue and Forsythe at the farm, more or less, and he was all but astonished to find how frankly she could enter into a plan of the kind. She never so much as mentioned the size of the house, or said how

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plain and uninviting its contents would seem to an English lord.

That was either a high compliment to Lord Bulleshue or a most thoroughbred assertion of her own value, apart from that of the farmhouse chairs and carpets.

It is not every lady, in city or town, who does not feel the mercury of her self-esteem go up or down in its tube, more or less, as the hues of her parlor upholstery warm into newness or freeze into the shabby chill of age.

"Good for her," thought Kemp. "Link Bishop was right in what he said about her pluck. She's all the more likely to be set in her opinions, though, and she doesn't like me any too well."

Not any the better, surely, for having fashionable and titled friends; but Nell was in difficulties of an increasing and accumulating order concerning her step-brother. The thing she believed of him was so mean and so cowardly, and her contempt for it deepened continually, and yet it was so difficult to paint all that baseness to her mind's eye, and hang the picture of it around the neck of the clear-eyed, firm-lipped youth who was driving the sorrel mare. It did not seem to belong to him, and she tried hard to stop her painting altogether.

Aunt Maud was at the door, waiting for them, and the first news she had to tell was of a disappointment to Link Bishop. He had called to take Nell out for a drive before she had been gone half an hour.

"He had those same horses, too. I was real

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glad you weren't here, and I came awful nigh telling him so."

"I don't believe they'd run away again," said Nell, and Kemp added:

"I think not. He's been training them ever since."

He said no word to indicate any displeasure at the idea of Nelly's riding with Link; but he was not sorry, somehow, for Aunt Maud's next remark:

"Guess it didn't break his heart not to find you in, though. It wasn't an hour after that, that he went racing by with Polly Magoon beside him."

"Polly Magoon?"

Nell Davenport was nearly at the foot of the stairs when she said that, and if she added any further comment it was after she reached her room. It was Aunt Maud who said to Kemp:

"She'd ought to know it, too. Polly's a good enough girl in her way; but if I was Nelly, no man should take me out buggy-riding one day and her the next."

Kemp's mouth was puckered just a little, for Polly Magoon's father had never made a successful speculation in all his life, while his own, starting from about the same level, had risen to be a bank cashier and a man of wealth. Even more could be said for Nell Davenport's claim to aristocratic elevation, and it was evident that Link Bishop had failed to see the true fitness of things in selecting his several feminine associates.

"I'll give Nell all the buggy-riding she wants, for a while."

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"Do, then. I wish you would. I'm sure her mother would not like some things."

That was not a politic speech, considering how little prepared Kemp was to sacrifice himself to the tastes and wishes of his step-mother, whatever he might do for the proper adoration of caste.

It was nearly time for the farmhouse dinner, and the eating of it would in no way interfere with proper enjoyment of another in town, five hours later, so Kemp turned away to care for the sorrel, while Aunt Maud made her way to the kitchen, and Nell Davenport, up in her room, was saying to herself:

"I ought to be ashamed to care. She's as good as anybody. I'll ride with him the next time he asks me. What right have I to find fault with anybody else's pride, when I have such a miserable mountain of it of my own?"

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CHAPTER XX.

SOMETHING WITH WINGS.

THERE is no better weather to be imagined than the world gets in October, and the somewhat southerly course of the *Hermetic* was taking her through a great zone of the best of it. Nevertheless there were differences to be noted between Sunday and Monday.

The former had been all but painfully brilliant, while the latter seemed to have borrowed a film or so of the soft haze which was at the same time creeping over the hills and valleys around Daynton. The passengers all pronounced it lovely, but the captain paid more attention than usual to his barometer. Pestilent inventions are they, professing to know more than is meet concerning things which are to come, and deserving to be stoned like all the other prophets. There is no way of preventing the fulfilment of a prophecy which will compare with stoning the man who made it, and the world has been wise in all ages.

Roland Morrow was more and more of an enigma to his fellow-passengers, as he went so benignly to and fro among them. They could see that he was anything rather than talkative, and yet that he always seemed to be in quiet conversation with somebody. It was curious, too, what varied effects his talk had

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upon different people. There were those who almost manifestly tried to get away from it, and there were others whose manners showed that they would gladly have heard more. Some faces drew out into correctly measured lengths of pious appreciation; some clouded into disapprovals their owners found it difficult to formulate; some put on the wooden look which passes for high-bred indifference; and there were faces in which something suggestive of a dawn arose, as if a new thought was creeping up to their inner horizon, and there would be more light for them, by and by.

It was no part of his purpose, evidently, to shun Mrs. Henderson, whatever may have been her will in the premises, and she had been almost compelled to ask him questions. She now knew, therefore, that he had never been married; that he had not revisited his native land since he first sailed for India; that he had finally surrendered his missionary duties; and that the net result to himself of his long toil in a trying climate was a body the performance of whose vital functions was likely to cease at any moment.

"Are your lungs affected, Roland — Mr. Morrow?"

"I cannot often see that they are."

"Or your heart?"

"That, perhaps, among other items of my machinery. Do you remember the tall, old clock in your father's dining-room, Mrs. Henderson?"

"Indeed I do."

She did not say a word of her associations, or any

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of them, with the hour-hand of that clock—of quiet Sunday evenings, when it crept too rapidly up toward the zenith mark of its black-toothed circle, and he added :

"The weights kept it agoing, just about the same, until they touched the bottom of their box, and then the clock stopped. My clock is nearly run down, that's all."

"Could you not be wound up again? Change of climate? Rest?"

"No, Mrs. Henderson, not to keep time any more. I am going to a house where there is no time."

At that very moment the bluff cashier broke into the conversation :

"Good morning, Mr. Morrow. Mrs. Henderson has been telling me about you. Glad to hear you are an old neighbor."

"Good morning, Mr. Henderson. Yes, I suppose we were born within twenty miles of each other."

"You came into the world first ; but not so very much. Do you know, I've been thinking back, and I remember you?"

"Ah! So long ago, too?"

"Sure of it. Tell you what helps me. I remember hearing you preach. Can't say if 'twas your first sermon ; but I do remember some one saying, 'There's a good lawyer spoiled.'"

"The sermon did not impress him favorably, then?"

"Perhaps not. Maybe you hadn't learned how to preach as you did yesterday."

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"I am very sure of that."

"Well, I know more, myself, than I did then, but there are a few things I'd like to talk with you about."

Talk he did, up and down the deck, and Mrs. Henderson stole away without any difficulty.

Hours afterward, when she and her husband met in their own state-room, almost his first words to her were:

"I've got to say one thing, pet; I'm on the mourner's bench."

"Why, Mr. Henderson! what do you mean?"

"Repentance, my dear. Perfect load of it. I do wish this old tub would travel faster. I sha'n't sleep a square nap out till I've hunted up Margaret and her husband."

"You've no idea where they are—"

"That's the curse of it. Here I've been trying to say the Lord's Prayer ever since Morrow wound up his talk yesterday, and I stick at the word 'trespasses,' as if I were trying to swallow a bone. It won't go down."

"I'm sure I forgive her!"

"Glad of it. Don't see, though, what you've got to forgive, nor I either. My own daughter! Only one God ever gave me. Don't care if she'd married a Hottentot! The Dutch music-teacher was no crime. I made it one. God forgive me! I'll hunt her up, soon as I get ashore, if I have to hire detectives."

He was in the gruffest kind of earnest, and his second wife was every way wise enough to sym-

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pathize with him. Men of his stamp rarely meet with much conjugal opposition when there are tears in their voices and a quivering downward twist of the corners of their mouths. They do not exactly weep, you know, for they are not weeping men; but the whole human family knows that they are explosive.

It would have done Kemp Henderson's heart good if he could have known what was passing in that of his father at the time the pretty sorrel mare set out upon her second trot to Daynton. Not, however, but that the young man's heart was full enough. He had thought a great deal about Margaret and her husband and children that day, ever since reading a letter that came from the bank president in the great city. He had conveyed the good news it brought him to good Aunt Maud, and it had made her sing. Such queer old hymns, too, as had come quavering up to the glad surface of her kindly soul and out at her thankful lips. Bits of ancient praise from which all the melody had gone to heaven long ago, and remained there. Still, they answered Aunt Maud's purposes, and Nell Davenport thought she had never before seen the old lady look so positively handsome.

All that was crowded out of Kemp's heart and thought now, and yet their fulness was more oppressive than ever.

The sorrel mare was put in good keeping at a stable in the neighborhood, and Kemp entered the Raynor domain on foot. The first he really knew about it, through the thick fog of his thoughts, he

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was shaking hands with Mr. Latimer Raynor himself, in the drawing-room, and receiving the information that the ladies and the rest would be detained but a moment. They all came, and the summons to the dinner-table followed almost immediately. There was nothing to remark upon, one way or the other, in the welcome received by Kemp from his hostess or her daughter. They took him as a matter of course, in the most thoroughly well-bred fashion, and he learned a great deal from that fact, without instantaneously understanding just how much he had learned. He only knew, at the moment, that something hot and angry was kicking against the door of his heart, as if it wanted to get out, and burn somebody. Never, he thought, had Katherine appeared more strikingly beautiful; but then he could remember having thought that very thing on more occasions than one or two. He caught himself, now, wondering if she were making precisely the same impression upon her other guests.

If it were true of Lord Bulleshue, the effect had been to stir the merry Englishman to a more than usually magnetic outflow of good spirits and pleasant talk. He was a capital fellow for a dinner party, indeed. One of those rare men who seem to make everything taste better for everybody else at the table. A common man can always eat better, after a something he has said, with a fear it would sound flat and stupid, has been heartily laughed over by a great man—a man over six feet high and with a title.

Bulleshue was especially friendly to Kemp, and

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Mrs. Raynor almost made up her mind that they were, had been, and would be intimate friends, and it passed her comprehension altogether.

Carlton Forsythe was simply himself, and that was all that was really necessary for him to be at any dinner-table; but it cost him an effort to be so, and that was a thing to be remarked upon. Not that any ordinary observation would have detected it. If you breathe upon a highly polished mirror and then stand off a little, say across a table, you will barely detect your work, and no other eyes will see it, but the faint cloud is there, in spite of the perfect surface under it.

Kemp Henderson saw the cloud, very dimly, and knew from whose lips the breath came, for he had also been conscious that Forsythe's eyes had read his own when he was studying the face of Katherine Raynor.

Rivals?

That was the very question in Lord Bulleshue's mind when he was explaining to Mr. Raynor the difference between the English partridge and the American.

"All in the feathers and weight, my dear sir. Once they are on the table it's all the same, if the cook has done his duty. Your own is a faithful being."

"Been with us a long time."

"I hope Mr. Henderson and our friend Link Bishop will help us to the birds they tell of. I'm dying to be at them. No preserves, like ours at home. I imagine it's more like shooting on the

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Scotch moors. Not so much murder of tame poultry and more real sport. Our pheasant killing and all that is only fit for market-men, most of it."

It was dreadful to hear an English lord speak in such a style of the athletic sports which preserve the iron manhood of his native land; but Mrs. Raynor bowed to the eccentric necessity, and Forsythe calmly seconded the heresy. He even gave a graphic description of some shooting he himself had done among the lordly preserves of one of his British friends.

"We will give you something with more work in it," said Kemp. "Put you in training for your sport in the northern woods."

So the talk ran on, all over the surface of things, and Katherine Raynor seemed to know all about birds; and Kemp astonished her by knowing so much about many other matters, as well as by the skill with which he could discuss them. Mrs. Raynor wondered where he had secured such good manners; and Mr. Raynor listened, and smiled, and continually pulled back his wandering thoughts from their persistent search after that young man's father and the slow, old tub of a steamship which was bringing him home.

If he had known her route he could easily have found her, for the *Hermetic* had not varied a hair, that day, from the track marked out for her upon the chart of her nautical directors. She was the condensed respectability of ocean ferry-boats, removed by hundreds and hundreds of tons of high character and capacity above the flighty movements

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of romantic sailing craft, and the perilous impulsiveness which associates itself with sharp cutwaters and quick voyages. It was as if she knew precisely where she was going, and there is something more than human in that.

It was almost like a leaf from human biography, however, that her course should lead her, as the sun went down, deeper and deeper into the semi-opacity of a grim, gray mist.

"No star-gazing to-night, Mrs. Henderson," said Roland Morrow, cheerfully, as they stood upon the deck, after supper, surrounded by a party of listless passengers who had come up for a look at the fog.

"We could hardly see another ship if it were near us."

"We are not likely to meet any, out here. Seems to me a fog like this is something very unusual in mid-ocean."

He was right about it, but at that moment Mr. Henderson exclaimed:

"Is that a sail?"

"A sail! Where?"

"To leeward. Something white, out there in the mist. I'm quite sure I saw it."

"There would have been a hail," said Roland Morrow.

"They may not have seen us," said Mrs. Henderson.

"There it is again! See!"

They had been straining their eyes, one and all, and their heads were bent forward now.

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Something white is apt to be seen, by imaginative people, in the densest of fogs; but Mr. Henderson was in no sense an imaginative person.

There it came again, and nearer this time, sweeping in through the mist as if it were but a denser eddy of it, looming larger than life in the very vagueness of its grand, white presence; nearer, so gracefully, so swiftly, and then once more the albatross waved its wide wings, and vanished.

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CHAPTER XXI.

LINK BISHOP'S VICTORY.

THERE must have been something catching in Aunt Maud Henderson's hilarity, that evening, for Nell Davenport displayed an unwonted degree of vivacity at the tea-table. She was so bright, indeed, that she drew upon herself a continued succession of affectionate glances. The dear, old lady did so long to unbosom her secret, and give Nell her share of the great good which had come to the family. There, however, was her promise to Kemp standing right in the way, and it made her think of him and of his brotherly agency in the newly developed blessing. So she talked about him, and praised him for his many excellences, and seemed unable to let herself be aware that he ever had shown a single defect of character.

Nell knew better than that, but was not cruel enough to say so, and Aunt Maud could but notice how carefully she avoided any dispute of even the most extravagant assumptions on her part.

"She can't really hate him. I'm sure he's always been polite to her. If she only knew what he's done for his sister!"

Nell did not know, and Aunt Maud's partial eyes and ears were not of the keenest or she might have noticed a good deal more than she did. The young

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woman's "assent" was only such as silence gives, and that is not always the most emphatic which can be given. Her cheerfulness, too, well as it became her, had something in it ideally related to the perfect fit of the neat dress she had on. A piece of admirable home hypocrisy, such as love manufactures, and wears, to an extent unknown by those who do not inquire into the secrets of the dressing-rooms where we get our hearts and faces ready for dear company.

"Kemp is having a good time," said Aunt Maud, as they arose from the table. "He won't be home till pretty late."

"He, and Mr. Forsythe, and Lord Bulleshue have a great deal to talk about, he told me."

"Well, we won't sit up for him. Now, dear, don't mind me."

"I'm going up-stairs for a while. Then I'll bring my book down."

"Do, dear. Is it anything you would like to read to me?"

"It's the same one. I've neglected it. We can begin just where we left off."

Kemp's return had been quite an interruption to the calm routine of life at the farmhouse, and a good many things had been neglected; but any book Nell was reading was apt to be one she could enjoy with Aunt Maud. It did the old lady good, always, even if, as was sometimes the case, there were many pages which did not convey to her mind ideas as distinct as those they found there already. The old ideas held their own, and the new ones

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stumbled around among them for a while, and then emigrated.

Nell did not pick up any book when she reached her room. Reading or the desire to read had not brought her up there. Only the fact that her cheerfulness was tired out, and she longed to sit down by the window, and give her hypocrisy a good rest. It fell from her like a cloak, the moment she closed her door, and she sank into her chair with a long-drawn, inexplicable sigh.

"He worships the world. He is a complete idolater, if there ever was one. It would be of no use to say so to Aunt Maud."

That was evidently a verdict upon Kemp Henderson; but it was not followed by any open passing of sentence. The fate of all idolaters was before him, no doubt, and all men know that that includes the consecutive destruction of each and every idol, in the temple thereof.

Nell Davenport had other subjects for thought besides Kemp, and they were present with her, loudly demanding her attention.

Link Bishop?

He and Polly Magoon personified, seemingly, a large part of the surroundings of her new position in life, as Aunt Maud and Kemp did another, and they did but add blackness to the enigma she was wrestling with. So did her mother, and Mr. Henderson, and the Raynors. So did Carlton Forsythe, and Lord Bulleshue, and every other human form of the long procession which came marching past her mind's eye as she stared from her open window

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across the stubble-fields and closely cropped pastures of the farm.

"What is my position? Where am I? What am I? What can there be before me?"

That was it. Penniless; almost without blood kindred; unprovided with a profession, or a trade, or a way in life. A sort of pensioner upon a mother with whom—and she felt it more deeply than ever, now that mother was so soon to bring back her social success and her new ambitions—she had little enough of the sympathy which should exist between mother and daughter. Living in a family the male members of which could but regard her as a species of elegant encumbrance, to be gotten rid of joyfully in any way accordant with the usages of good society.

That was not all, but whatever more there was, it all came to her. Every countenance her memory called up seemed to have some word of its own for her, and all the words were bitter.

Her fair face grew a little pale, after a few quick flushes, and its firmer lines gathered to themselves a hardness which was sad to see, until, at last, there was no shadow of a tremor on her lips when they parted to utter: "Alone? Yes, that is true. I am alone. But I am not helpless. This thing shall not be. This life is not God's answer to the soul of any woman. He will surely give me another."

She was still gazing out of the window; but she did not see the stubble-fields or the browning pasture slopes. The long procession she had silently

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summoned had come, and form after form of it had looked her in the eyes and gone by. All but one —a form and face that seemed to be there suddenly and as if uncalled for; but that did not speak to her, even when he too glided by, and disappeared.

So vague it is apt to be—so very vague and dim —that shadowy vision which every true-hearted young woman has seen, as if she saw it not, of the man who has not yet paused to look her in the eyes, and speak. The man she cannot see distinctly, if she would; but yet who might wear such a face as—

Nell's own was all one burning blush, and she covered it with her hands.

"Never! How could I think of such a thing!"

She had recognized him, then? If so, the recognition did but drive her away from the window, for she arose at once, and picked up a volume from the table.

There was a pretty ribbon of a marker in it, patiently keeping the place for her and Aunt Maud during those days of absence and neglect. She would know just where to begin among the unreal heroes and heroines of that romance; but she was conscious of a feeling that their pictured joys and woes would be a little tame to her, that evening.

Would it have helped her any, if she had known the other movements of the drama of real life in which she was herself unavoidably an actor? If, for instance, she could have seen the now deserted deck of the *Hermetic*, damply surging onward

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through the fog ; or looked in upon the brilliant dining-room of Mrs. Latimer Raynor ; or even if she could have followed the fortunes of Link Bishop, after he too finished his supper, and spent a more than commonly large number of minutes in his dressing-room.

That was what Link had done, truly.

Nobody could accuse him of paying too much attention to his outer man ; but he generally looked well. He could afford to wear good clothes, for he had only his own personal bills to pay. The Dayton tailors did well enough by him, except that their tastes must have agreed too well with his own in the way of patterns in plaid and striped goods, and the amount of color a civilized man is permitted to condense into his necktie. The tie he wore that evening could not have been safely exhibited to a short-horned bull or a turkey-cock ; but Link's dark, saturnine face looked well above its bar of bright blood-red.

For a wonder, he had determined to seek his evening's adventures on foot. He had, indeed, parted with the sorrel mare, and there were still doubts as to the capacity of the black team for standing long, hitched in front of any one gate. He may have been influenced by some such consideration, or he may have been willing to travel slowly, and get his inner man in order.

There was need of dressing, there.

The thoughts which walked into the road with him all related to Nell Davenport ; but there they were joined by others.

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"It won't be of much use to go to see her to-night," he said, at length. "Aunt Maud, I wouldn't mind so much, but Kemp'll be there, and I've seen all I want to see of him to-day, and I've got to see him again to-morrow. It wouldn't be a call on Nell, you see."

There was less peril of that sort than he imagined; but he had no one to tell him of Kemp's visit to Daynton. At the forks of the road his thoughts were still holding a disorderly sort of town meeting, and his legs took the matter up. He was not permitted by them to go around the turn toward the Henderson farm. One foot followed the other with slow and slower deliberation, until both of them paused, for a moment, just inside the open gate of old Magoon's yard.

There was no light in the window of the little parlor, and it occurred to Link that it was a good sign.

"She has lots of company, but there's no one here to-night. I'll walk right in."

So he did, and in a moment afterward there was a light in the parlor, and Polly Magoon was shining many times better and brighter than the lamp upon the first out-and out visit she had ever received from her old-bachelor neighbor.

Alas for him, nevertheless, for he had come at an early hour, and he had taken no bond from Polly's several admirers that they would be scared away by the ominous light in the vine-clambered windows.

They did not come all at once; but before nine

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o'clock Link Bishop was one of four, and two of the others were young fellows who were well enough in their way, but whom he did not think his equals exactly.

Polly was polite to them, of course; for they were old acquaintances, and she could hardly have found fault with them on any ground of caste. They were younger than Link, too, and almost any girl would have said they were better looking, and they knew it themselves.

Polly did her best, one against three; but Link did not come to her help as he ought until the two later arrivals braced themselves mutually against each other and against him to out-talk and outstay him. They should have known better; but they were mere colts, and they had never heard the history of the black team.

Link aroused himself, and took the reins of that conversation in a way that fairly astonished Polly Magoon, if not himself and the two colts.

She had not dreamed there was so much fun in him, and they would never have guessed that he knew so much about almost everything.

Outstay him? He would see about that. Old Magoon and his wife went to bed at their usual hour, saying something to one another about the habits of sober young people in some long-forgotten era. The talk went on and on, until Polly was sure the two younger men had nothing more in them, and she wondered what Link Bishop would find to say next. Then, at last, one of the vanquished colts took a furtive look at his watch, and

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Polly upset him entirely by asking what time it was.

He was not a dull-witted youth, and he could think quickly enough to say :

" Run down—I declare !"

But for all that he arose from his chair, and put out his hand toward the table for his hat, and his associate in defeat solemnly imitated him.

It must have been a bitter thing for those two young men, when they were rods and rods away from Magoon's gate, to look back as they did, and see the tall form of Link Bishop yet standing by it, and Polly's white dress dimly visible beside him. They knew very well she would ask him to call again. She had done the same to both of them. And each was wondering inwardly when and how soon Link would accept the invitation, for that would probably be the evening for them to call somewhere else, or stay at home.

Link knew it was late, for his own watch was in good order, and he had taken a sly glance at it before he left the house. Polly knew it, too ; but she cared as little as anybody for the mere passage of time. They would both be up in good season in the morning, and that was the main thing. Still, Link was too wise a man to overstay his welcome, and it was not a great while before he was striding away homeward, muttering to himself :

" Call again ? Guess I will. She's prime good company. Wonder what she means to be wasting her time on those two half-picked goslings ? Can't just help herself, I s'pose. I'd get rid of 'em

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somehow, if I were she, if I had to call the old man down to help me."

A pleasant evening for Link, and he went home at peace with himself and all the world; but that was a good deal more than Kemp Henderson could say.

He had remained after dinner, of course, in response to a little well-bred urging from Mrs. Raynor and a smile from Katherine, and a little party of the most unexceptionable friends of the family had dropped in, and the evening that followed had been charming. Everybody said so, and most of them had good enough reasons, if they had been called upon to give them.

Kemp himself had done admirably well. Even Lord Bulleshue had been compelled to take note of it, and say to Carlton Forsythe:

"He'll do, my boy. All he needs now is a year in Europe and a few months in the Sandwich Islands. There's the making of a man in him."

Forsythe nodded, and smiled; but he was thinking of another matter, just at that moment. He had not been able to avoid the use of his eyes. Eyes have automatic habits of their own, after they are properly trained, and they will see things, whether or no. So those of Forsythe had conveyed to him, of their own accord, the information that Kemp Henderson was no favorite in the Raynor household, and that he had somehow been made aware of it that very evening. It was not a matter upon which he chose to comment, or had any right to speculate; but it fully accounted afterward for

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the fact that the sorrel mare was again led out of her stable long before the little coterie at the Raynor mansion broke up, and longer still before Link Bishop walked himself away from old Magoon's gate.

There had not been an objectionable word or look from man or woman upon which Kemp's searching mental fingers could place themselves. Nothing but appreciation to the verge of flattery, and politeness to the borders of excess, and cordial invitations to come again. All of that had been given him, and more, and side by side with every well-smiled, well-toned offering had come also something he could neither see nor hear. Something he could no more than feel, that was all, and that made him careless, all the way home, whether the sorrel mare trotted, walked, or flew.

The gait she chose was good enough, and it carried him safely home, to find the whole house dark except the low-turned lamp in the entry and the white radiance that came softly through the curtained window beyond which Nell Davenport sat, with a book wherein she was not reading. Kemp could stable his own horse, and find his own way to his room; but he had not returned, like Link Bishop, from winning any kind of a victory.

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CHAPTER XXII.

WASTED AMMUNITION.

THERE were four men who had agreed with one another to get up early on Tuesday morning, and tramp the fields and woods for feathered game; but Lord Bulleshue was the only one of the four who, when the time came for rising, cared whether or no there were any woodcocks in the world.

Nevertheless they were all on hand at the time appointed, and they not only earned the right to eat hearty breakfasts; but astonished themselves and his lordship by the number and variety of their feathered prizes.

"Sportsman?" calmly remarked the latter gentleman, at the end of it all, as he gazed at the results of his own excellent practice. "Do you call me a sportsman? Look at that, will you? If that isn't a bag for Nimrod."

They looked at it, and at their own less miscellaneous collections.

"You've been playing Audubon," said Forsythe, "and trying for a collection of American birds. I think you hit everything you fired at except the meadow-lark."

"He dodged, the yellow rascal. And then he sat down up there somewhere, and laughed at me. I'll not carry in the bobolink."

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"Yes, you must. I want the Daynton boys—"

"The boys? Hide 'em all under the wagon seat. All but the game birds."

"Oh, that's nothing. Blackbirds and robins are game for them."

"I'm ashamed of myself—I am, indeed. But I wanted to see what sort of birds you had."

"You're not so far out of the way," said Kemp Henderson. "It isn't every day you can knock over such a variety."

"Grand fun, any way. I'll know what to do with myself now."

"It'll be trout next," remarked Link Bishop; "and then pickerel."

"I'll be ready for you."

"You three will make up the party to-morrow," said Kemp. "I've got to make a run to the city. Back next day."

Lord Bulleshue and Forsythe returned to Daynton, and Link to his farm, and Kemp went into the house to tell Aunt Maud what were his plans for that day, and the next, and the next. He had already shown her his letter from the great city bank president, and she was as anxious about the result as he could be.

"Such a grand thing for Maggie and her husband! Now, Kemp, do let me tell Nelly."

"Not a word, Aunt Maud; but there's another thing you may tell her. The great party at the Raynors, in honor of Lord Bulleshue and Forsythe, is set down for Thursday evening."

"She knows that."

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"Of course, but about her dress for the evening. I'll do any kind of shopping for her, in New York. You ask her what she wants."

His inner thought was that whatever might be his own lack of skill in such matters, he could call in Mrs. von Rahm as an auxiliary expert, and he spoke with confidence accordingly. He could hardly have made an offer more completely to the mind of Aunt Maud, knowing as she did the somewhat limited resources of Nell Davenport's wardrobe, and she hardly waited till Kemp was out of hearing before she almost excitedly broached the matter to the maiden herself.

"He says it won't be a bit of trouble, Nelly. So much better than getting your things in Dayton."

"He is very kind. Very. I am very much obliged to him."

"He is the best fellow in the world, Nelly."

"But I do not intend to buy a single thing. I have all I want."

"It will be a grand affair, my dear. I do so want you to look your best!"

There had been a dreamy expression in the fine, gray eyes of Nelly, and her manner of refusing Kemp's offer had been altogether devoid of pride. There could not have been in it anything unpleasant, one would think; but now the dreamy look faded rapidly away, and something frosty and firm took its place. The ice that forms when dependence refuses to be dependent. It is apt to be thin ice, over some people's wills, and it cracks easily to

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let a heavy gift through; but even Aunt Maud could discern the glacial glitter and the signs of increasing strength in the case before her.

"Come, Nelly, do let him get you something. I will take care of it. It will be a gift from me."

A dreadfully poor diplomatist was good Miss Henderson. Nell would have accepted more from her than from anybody else; but the cover was off, so to speak, and Kemp's offer was formulated with a plainness which no additional words could modify or improve.

A gift from him? Small or large? Even if handed to her cunningly, around the corner of dear Aunt Maud's kind heart?

Nell's eyes flashed through their ice, and she stood almost stiffly erect.

"If it is too grand for me to go with what I have, I can stay at home."

"Nelly! Nelly! You will look better than anybody else in the room. What did I say to hurt your feelings?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all. Now, Aunt Maud, you must thank Kemp for me. You really do not know how well I can manage."

Perhaps there was less to explain than Nell imagined; for Aunt Maud took the initiative, and kissed her, and patted her on the shoulder, and looked so very benevolent that all the ice on that side of Nell Davenport melted at once, and trickled away; but it did not turn into any water warm enough to make tears of.

Kemp received his answer later in the day, and

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it was surprising how entirely as a matter of course he took it. Men are dreadfully stupid about a great many things, and wise women actually expect it of them ; but Aunt Maud was unwise enough to add :

"You might speak to her about it yourself, Kemp?"

"I? Well, no, I think not. She knows her own business best."

Very indifferent he seemed, and very carelessly he spoke ; but for all that he could but feel that he had received a snub. He would have been altogether too stupid if he had not comprehended that.

There was, moreover, enough of frost in Nelly's politeness at the dinner-table to verify his first impression, and Kemp was in precisely the frame of mind for a snub to have its uttermost effect upon him. Still he did not say to Aunt Maud what he said to himself.

"I'll see about it!" Which, being interpreted, was :

"Too proud, eh? And she doesn't like me? Well, she shall wear something of mine at that party, or I'll know the reason why."

There was evidently a streak of obstinacy in Kemp's disposition ; but then he was an only son, a spoiled child, and too much in the habit of having his own way.

The evening train bore him southward, and he would have a whole day to himself in the great city. Time enough for any amount of business and

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charity and shopping, if he should rise early, and go right at it.

Mrs. Raynor's great party was already the talk of Daynton society. The invitations for it were all in the hands of those whose presence was expected, and the bitterness of wounded pride was rankling in all the hearts of the many who deemed themselves slighted by the omission of their names from the list. The size of her house as well as other and more important considerations had been duly taken into account by the giver of the party; but every uninvited social ornament within ten miles of Daynton dreamed of those brilliant rooms as desolate, though thronged, in the absence of the one face and figure or the one pair of mustaches which would not, could not be there.

Mrs. Raynor heard none of the spiteful predictions of her coming failure. No echo brought her word from disappointed lips that she was a snob, bowing the knee to a foreign aristocrat, or that she had invited riff-raff, and insulted the best families. Nobody sent word to Katherine that she was setting her cap for a lord or that he would despise her for it. Not even Mr. Latimer Raynor guessed why the deposits of no less than three small mercantile concerns, two lawyers, and a rising physician were that week transferred from the First National Bank of Daynton to the second institution of that nature.

He, stately and frigid man of wealth and rank and high moral tone, was busy enough during those few hurried days. Not that he gave any especial

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attention to household matters, beyond an occasional caution to his wife as to her outlays, but there was enough upon his mind for any one mind to carry. Further news from Wall Street had by no means softened the bruise made by the downfall of Bounce & Co. The columns of figures over which the country banker pored, in the elegant seclusion of his private office, though not as long as he had seen in his day, "footed up" in a way which seemed to fascinate him. His face grew white, at times, and old Mr. Gerry stuck more closely than ever to his books in the great room of the bank. The directors came and went, and so did customers and privileged visitors, and they all went away with a feeling of increasing respect for a man who could be so manifestly haughty and at the same time so smilingly condescending to other men, and who had English lords and their rich friends come to visit with him. Never had Mr. Latimer Raynor stood higher, and the knowledge of it strengthened in him a desperate determination that he would dare and do anything the devil might march him up to, rather than step down one round of his splendid ladder—or rather than permit the tumble of Bounce & Co. to kick it rudely out from under him.

If he could but have felt sure of the precise day of Mr. Cashier Henderson's return!

The sailing time of the *Hermetic* and the question whether or no the absent man was really on board of her, troubled Mr. Raynor exceedingly.

"I suppose he did sail on her. He wrote that

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he would, and I never knew him to fail of keeping his word. She must be half way over now. It's an awful risk to run ; but I must run it. I'll take them all up with my own, if the worst comes to the worst. They all fall due before he can get here. Gerry's mouth is stopped."

The old book-keeper's mouth had been in a peculiar condition for at least a week. It did open, and shut so often, as he pored over his columns of figures. Even his wife, at home, had noticed that he no longer snored in his sleep, but lay still and silent until morning, and she had not been able to get from him an explanation of a thing so extraordinary. Perhaps he understood the meaning of the enigmatic soliloquy which he did not hear, and knew that the notes of Mr. Josiah Henderson, cashier, endorsed by Mr. Latimer Raynor, president, to a fearfully large amount, were rapidly approaching maturity, and that there was also a heavy over-draft charged against the name of Kemp's father, and that all this was contrary to rule and without the knowledge of the bank directors, and that he himself had somehow become a party to the whole dangerous business and to the concealment thereof.

Good for it all? Of course they were. Abundantly able to meet their obligations, and just the men to do it, but what would happen to the bank if the outside world should happen to discover the matter?

Mr. Gerry's affections were strongly entwined around the bank, and all his confidence in Mr.

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Latimer Raynor did not avail to give him sound sleep.

Neither did Mr. Raynor's confidence in himself make good the deficit in his cash resources which looked up at him from the foot figures of his Wall Street speculations. It was not altogether wonderful, perhaps, even with all that upon his mind, that so fond a father should permit his eyes to wander, at meal-times and in the brilliant, social evenings he spent at home, from the face of his beautiful daughter to that of one or another of the two gentlemen whom she had entertained so irreproachably.

Both of them were rich, with the odds considerably in favor of the American. It would be almost a wonder if she should fail in doing, for one or the other, what Lord Bulleshue was said to do for every snipe he fired at. He himself had remarked about it, indeed :

" It's nothing at all, you know. You never fire at the bird himself. All you have to do is to send your shot a little ahead of him, and it's waiting for him when he gets there. Shoots himself, don't you see? If he'd turn away ever so little he'd miss you altogether."

There was a queer kind of sporting philosophy in that ; but there was a good deal of " shot" of a very dangerous sort flying around the tawny head of Lord Bulleshue, in those days, and he was likely to be made a perfect target of at the great party. Forsythe laughingly warned him of it, only to be told with a customary sigh :

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"I know how it'll be, my dear fellow. Same as ever. I'll not be able to speak to the same girl twice. And each one of 'em 'll be prettier than the others. Make a bet with you, my boy."

"I'm your man."

"Well, no. I won't do it. Never bet, my dear fellow. Will Kemp get back in time to tell us the names of everybody, after we've forgotten them?"

Even Lord Bulleshue's reckless tongue could be switched off in time to avoid offering to wager a new hat with Forsythe that Katherine Raynor would be the handsomest girl in her own drawing-room, no matter how many others might come in.

All this accompanied a late-in-the-evening cigar, in his lordship's room, and neither of them could have guessed the state of affairs in a much more important chamber, in another corner of the house. More important because of its occupancy, and every way as elegant, for Katherine Raynor's taste in such matters ascended almost to the region of high art.

Neither she nor her mother was smoking; but there were clouds, nevertheless, in the clear atmosphere of the rooms and on the two fair faces. Clouds as of anxiety and foreboding.

"I cannot explain, Katherine. I can 'ardly guess. But something is weighing terribly upon your father. 'E dreams, and 'e mutters in 'is sleep."

"What can it be?"

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"Something about Mr. 'Enderson, I think. I do so wish 'e would come 'ome."

"I am glad Mrs. Henderson will not be at the party."

"I'm not sure. I'd be willing to 'ave three of 'er 'ere if 'er 'usband could return to his duties at the bank. Something is wrong."

"It cannot be anything very serious, mother. Did you notice in what high spirits Lord Bulleshue was, this evening?"

"'E is capital company. I 'ardly know if I do not like 'im better than Mr. Forsythe."

Katherine was silent; but no change came over her face to tell of aught there might be behind it. Her training had been thorough; and she did honor to it. Even her own mother had given up trying to read the exquisite "dead language" of that perfect smile.

Clouds, clouds, and both mother and daughter failed entirely in an effort they made to declare them all a mere mist of the Indian Summer.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

ABOUT A WASTED LIFE.

THAT next morning the captain of the *Hermetic* stood near the prow of his great ship, as she ploughed unhesitatingly forward, and by him stood Roland Morrow and Mr. Henderson, gazing out upon the rolling masses of gray vapor which still wrapt them closely around.

"Captain," said the burly cashier, "is there really any danger in a fog at sea?"

Mr. Henderson's French was fairly good, and the captain smilingly responded:

"Like this, for instance? No, not out here. We are hundreds of miles from the nearest rock or islet, and our foghorn sounds often enough to warn any possible neighbor."

"Of course. But is there no other source of peril?"

"Ha, ha! Do you fear we will miss our course, because we cannot see the water ahead of us? Do we see it at night?"

"No."

"Mr. Henderson," remarked Roland Morrow, "everybody in the wide world is at sea. In a kind of fog, too. No landmarks anywhere. Sailing by chart and compass, just as we are. Going by faith and not by sight."

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"Don't know about that," growled Mr. Henderson. "There's more that go on in downright ignorance and recklessness. All they care for is just to steam ahead. I've done lots of it, myself."

"Sure of it?" asked Morrow, as the captain bowed, and walked away. "I've studied that matter. No man ever lived an hour yet without faith of some kind, in something or somebody."

"Most often in himself, then."

"Perhaps, or in some idol he had dressed up in his own best clothes, or in the clothes and gewgaws he would like to wear. I learned a lesson from the Hindoos."

"What was that?"

"I went among them to preach to idolaters. Men of a different kind of religion or irreligion from those I left behind me."

"Well, did you not find them so?"

"Not a bit of it. Found them bowing down to the same old idols we worship in America, only under different names."

"I understand. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But there is one difference. We have churches."

"So have they, of their own making. Strong resemblances, too. Hard to get a member of one of them to listen to anything he never heard before, just as it is with us."

"The old doctrines are good enough for me."

"What are they, and how old are they? Is there any church you know of that believes what that or any other church did a hundred years ago?"

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"Why, of course. There are variations, perhaps; but the fundamental teachings are the same, are they not?"

"I thought so, once."

"You puzzle me exceedingly, Mr. Morrow."

"It puzzled me, for a while. I could not see through the fog, and so I took it for granted that He could not. I learned better than that from the heathen."

"From the heathen?"

"Yes, by finding out how much truth God had taught them, after all, and how little I knew of Him more than they did."

"And you an ordained minister and a missionary?"

"That's it, exactly. I had to come down from that before I could get at them at all. As soon as I pitched my theology overboard I stood some chance to get them to do the same with theirs."

"But you say you did not make any converts, after all?"

"What is that, please, Mr. Henderson? Do you know?"

"Well, no, I can't exactly express the idea in any other word."

"Because it's a word which has been robbed of all the meaning it ever had. The false notion now expressed by it has crammed our religious clubs at home—what we call our churches—with people who put their trust, not in God at all, but in the supposed sleight of soul they once had performed for them, and which they call their conversion."

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"Christians, Mr. Morrow."

"Are they? How do you know that? What is the difference between their souls and those of the great swarm outside—not of the positively evil—who really believe just as much, live just as well, and who do not happen to belong to any religious club?"

"The difference is essential. The fact of profession, Mr. Morrow."

"If it be a profession of fact. You are talking to a man who has been fighting hell on its own ground for twenty years, and who has learned a good deal about idols, and heathens, and caste, and that sort of thing."

The tall, soldierly form loomed up taller than usual to the eyes of Mr. Henderson, and it came vaguely into his mind that if there were a man on board who could really see through a fog it was the returned missionary. Still, some of the sharply uttered sentences of Roland Morrow had that in them which grated harshly upon his orthodoxly trained ears, and he gladly seized upon the arrival of his wife to help him change the subject.

She was ready to help, for her wits had already learned to be on their guard against dangerous questions whenever she drifted too near Roland Morrow.

And yet she was conscious of an hourly increasing interest in the man himself. He was well fitted to excite the interest of any good woman, member of a church, an admirer of religion and of its self-sacrificing servants; but there was more than

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that to be taken into the account of her inner thought.

Her memory had grown wonderfully bright and active, day by day, and she had recalled many another picture from the half-forgotten long ago beside that one last meeting in the vine-clad porch of the old farmhouse. Pictures, like that, in which appeared as a central figure the form of a tall, ungainly, but noble-looking young man, beside whom any other youth who happened to be there seemed commonplace and unheroic.

It was a most womanly idea which grew into cloudy half shape as she recalled those things. Not exactly sentimental, but with a sad, sweet perfume of tender interest clinging about it—the lingering smell of a burnt-offering long ago laid upon the altar of self, and that could now be made to arise faintly again before the shrine of vanity.

She had been the cause, and she knew it, only she hardly knew what she had been the cause of.

A changed career ; a wasted life ; years of vain toil, of unrequited suffering. How beautifully, how romantically faithful the man had been to his first and only love ! The incense came up with a great and pungent puff when that thought blew upon the dull fire in the censer, and Mrs. Henderson for the moment lost sight of both her subsequent husbands.

Chivalric, heroic, Bayard, Sidney, Irving, Christopher Columbus, how the great, grand names of wonderful men did tumble, and jostle each other in her memory, as she sought for one with which to

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match this man who had so calmly and unflinchingly walked away from her father's front door to waste himself in an effort to advance the kingdom of God on earth.

She pitied him, and could but feel more pious for her pity, and when she next met him she smiled as nearly as possible in the way she may have smiled more than twenty years ago. It was not so nearly that Roland Morrow mentally connected the two smiles; but perhaps he was not at that moment mourning over the wreck and ruin she had sent him into.

All that day the passengers of the *Hermetic* did their best to amuse themselves, without any help from the hidden horizon and the other beauties of the ocean-view they had paid for when they bought their tickets; and when the night again arrived it did but seem to draw the curtains of the fog a little closer, in token of bedtime coming. The ship's crew and officers seemed to mind the matter slightly enough, although it cost them something in the way of steam-whistle. The engineer took care of that; but all the rest were compelled to listen to the music, and then to listen vainly for any response in the fog. Plainly enough, they were alone, and therefore entirely safe.

Once more, as he and his wife were retiring to their state-room, did Mr. Henderson make mention of his sin against his daughter, and avow his intention of instituting a search for Margaret, the moment he should find himself safely on shore; and again his kind-hearted helpmeet offered him com-

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fort, and forbore to oppose so fatherly a purpose. At the same time she judiciously concealed from him any facial or verbal expression of her own will in the premises, that :

"Find her or not, she shall never bring her German husband into my house. I can take care of that, I think."

Little she imagined how easy it would have been, that day, for a skilful detective, or almost anybody else, to have discovered the whereabouts of Margaret von Rahm, or how small was the likelihood that either father or step-mother would ever be called upon to aid in the support of the "Dutch music-teacher" and his wife and children.

Kemp Henderson himself had been as much surprised as delighted with the improvement in the outer man of his really fine-looking brother-in-law. Margaret had been faithful in the matter of his new suit of clothes, and he had profited to the uttermost from his new diet of fresh hope, good food, and the high spirits of his wife. Kaiser and Lena had also come to his assistance, as children will, and every time he looked at them he drew in a breath of the renewed strength he would need if he were to continue them in their present prosperity. Von Rahm inwardly faltered a little when Kemp told him of the immediate prospect ; but a glance at Margaret's glad face rallied him, and he put on at once all he could muster of his old-time business air and self-possession.

Their first call, of course, was upon the great bank president, and that shrewd magnate was more

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favorably impressed than he had expected to be with the former junior partner of Stegmeyer Brothers. He even went so far as to tell von Rahm that his friends, the well-known banking-house of Bond & Co., had already informed themselves as to his financial record, and were prepared to make his personal acquaintance.

That was much for so great a man to say to a stranger seeking employment, and von Rahm was quite enough a man of the world to appreciate it. Only he credited a little too much of it to Kemp Henderson and too little to the text of certain cable despatches from Germany. Armed with a brief line of introduction, acknowledged by Kemp with thanks which came near the verge of unbusinesslike gratitude, the two young men passed on to the office of Bond & Co., and on the way von Rahm remarked :

" Bless you, my dear brother-in-law, I'm all right now. The very air of these places seems to agree with me. Why, I feel as if I were at home again."

" More than you were when you were trying to teach music, I should say."

The firm of Bond & Co. was badly situated that day, and it would have been the last house in the world to admit it. Their foreign correspondence was large ; the interests involved in it were vital to their business at home and abroad ; they had but one man capable of mastering and managing all its details, and this was his last day with them. His very capacity, and their refusal to fully

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meet his view of its rightful compensation, had forced him from them into better prospects and another connection, and they were wondering how they should wrestle with their next day's mail, when Kemp and von Rahm reached their threshold and walked in.

An introduction from the great bank president was excuse enough for cordiality, and it was all correct that the senior Mr. Bond, with an air of business austerity, should at once proceed to ascertain for himself the nature and extent of von Rahm's qualifications for the work expected of him.

Languages, currencies, methods of doing business, customs, forms, formulas—how he did go into them, and how speedily the well-trained graduate of the German commercial house ascertained how completely at sea in such matters was the head of the firm of Bond & Co. As the latter afterward remarked to his partners :

" Did he read the letters? I should say he did. Even the one we could not guess what tongue it was written in. He can walk all around Souter, any day."

Souter was the loss von Rahm was to make good to them. There was no pretence made of dallying or delay, for von Rahm was ready with Kemp's ten thousand dollars, in government bonds, to deposit as his guarantee, and both he and Kemp were pleasantly surprised at the liberality of the terms proposed.

" The same we have paid Mr. Souter," remarked Mr. Bond, quietly. " You will do his work—better

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too, I hope—and I don't see why you should not have his pay."

He did not add that Mr. Souter had given no security, and that he had risen with them from an office boy, instead of being the son-in-law of a rich American banker and coming with a letter from a banking magnate and with a possible European business connection. As to that latter, the thought of it was in the mind of Mr. Bond, and something he said, indefinitely, brought it to that of von Rahm.

"Friends in Europe? Certainly. I make no promises, but I will open a correspondence with them at an early day."

He would not be ashamed to do so now, and the sudden perception of that fact spread a broad, grateful plaster over a good share of what remained of the old sore spot on his pride.

"Mr. Souter will close his connection with us to-day, Mr. von Rahm. We wish you to take your desk at once."

"To-morrow?"

"No, sir. It will take you all that remains of to-day to familiarize yourself with your books. I shall be compelled to ask you to remain."

So it was Kemp Henderson, all alone, who bore to his glad sister the tidings of the beginning of her husband's new career.

She had fully believed it would come. As fully as one believes that the day will follow the dawn, for she had already felt the warmth of the sunrise. It could not have been that anything like night

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should come back right away. She had unbounded faith in her husband's capacity for his new position, and she was proud of it, like a true-hearted wife, and she was proud, too, of her brother, and right on the heels of that last emotion came a sudden revival of unconfessed interest in the remaining members of her family. Kemp had told her of Aunt Maud's unswerving affection for her, and he had more than hinted that all the fault of her estrangement from her father had not been with the latter. Now he ventured to add :

" It won't make any difference, Maggie. I mean to take that matter in hand myself."

" What matter, Kemp ?"

" Why, the business of getting you and father together again. As soon as he and von Rahm look each other in the eye, it'll be all right. They don't know each other. That's all."

" I know Mrs. Henderson—"

" So do I, but she won't have anything to do with it. Do you suppose she'll go out of her way to keep up a quarrel with a baroness—the wife of a thriving young banker in the city ?"

Margaret's cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkled, and it seemed to her as if there could not be in all the world such things as tenement-houses and pawnshops.

At all events, Kemp had not made a bad reading of the probable feelings of his step-mother, and he felt even more sure about his father. His work of brotherly love was done, however, and he took his leave at so early an hour as to almost offend his

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sister, and to sadly disappoint Kaiser and Lena. He had business to attend to, he said, and he must return by the evening train to Daynton. Margaret was no clairvoyant, and her vision could not follow him, after that, from one to another of the great jewelry establishments, until he seemed to have found what he was looking for, and so have finished the "business" he had mentioned.

"See if I can't have my way, once in a while," he muttered, as he settled himself in the corner of the palace car which bore him out of the city.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PRIEST AND THE PROPHET.

LINK BISHOP was not a recruit of the army of disappointed ones who had not received invitations to the Raynor party. Neither was Polly Magoon, and it was doubtless a source of comfort to both of them that their path through the great social ocean carried them so surely beyond the sweep of Mrs. Raynor's aristocratic drag-net. They did not dream of being fished for, and so no shock came to them, either of being caught or missed. They knew all about the net, however, and they had a lively chat at Magoon s gate, that Wednesday morning, concerning many of the willing fish who would be pulled ashore for Lord Bulleshue and his friend to look at.

"I'd really like to peek in on them," said Polly, frankly. "It'll be a perfect show. They say there'll be people there from twenty and thirty miles away. Some that'll have to come by the railroad, and go home in the milk trains in the morning."

"Sour milk, too, some of 'em," growled Link. It'll turn any cream to keep it all night in a hot room."

"I'd run the risk, though," said Polly. "If

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there's anything I do like, it's a dance, and the music 'll be the best kind."

"I'll take you to just the next one there is, Polly. Promise you'll go with me!"

"Of course I will. You must keep your word, now! You mustn't make me lose my chance!"

"Of going with some other fellow? Now, Polly!"

It was a little queer that he should feel so uncomfortable over the manifest fact that her thoughts were dwelling more upon the supposed dance than upon her proposed company; but it clinched and riveted his determination to keep his promise. Polly Magoon would be entirely safe in declining any and every other offer, and some such conviction came into her mind before he strode away up the road.

He came past the Henderson farm, on the way back to his own, a few hours afterward; but he caught no glimpse of Nell Davenport. He had heard, somehow, that Kemp had taken a run to New York, and knew that the coast was clear; but country etiquette forbade so bold a thing as an unexcused call in broad daylight. Link had no imaginable errand at the Hendersons', and so he walked right along.

Unseeing and yet seen, for Nell was at her window with a great flood of some rippling, cream-colored stuff across her lap. It was one of those soft, semi-lustrous fabrics which may be of silk or of wool or of some other substance, to men who are not learned in dry-goods and their origin, but which

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go so artistically well in company with dark hair and clear, faintly roseate complexions. Aunt Maud was by no means unjustified in the high degree of confidence she had expressed in Nell's capacity for looking well.

"It will be plain. I don't think it will bear much lace or trimming. Almost too plain. What I really need is a few natural flowers for my hair, and a bouquet. It would be of no use, though, if I had one, for my old holder is broken too badly to carry. No flowers to be had, either, short of Daynton."

Her thought ran on without interruption. Even the glimpse she had of Link Bishop in the road only drew from her the momentary variation of:

"I do hope he won't stop. He won't see anybody but Aunt Maud, if he does. This dress must be finished to-day."

That meant, precisely, that it was a piece of work she did not intend to have around after Kemp came home. She had worn that dress but once, and he had never seen it; but she did not intend he should until the very last moment. She would not give the slightest opportunity for criticism or remark. Those are things young women will submit to but from the narrowest circle of those whom they like very much or are a little afraid of. Kemp Henderson was terribly outside of Nell Davenport's confidential squad—if any such existed. Aunt Maud came up-stairs, now and then, to see how matters were getting along; but the rising tide of modern scientific dress-making had

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long since swept airily past and away from the sober-colored cove in which her tastes were anchored, and all she ventured to say was :

" I never wore anything with a tinge of yellow in my born days, but when you had that thing on the other time it seemed to just suit ye."

Carlton Forsythe was a man of much experience and no little thoughtfulness, for he carried Lord Bulleshue miles and miles away, that Wednesday forenoon, among some remarkable trout streams reported by Link Bishop, and the two returned barely in time for dinner. Katherine Raynor and her mother, therefore, were as completely disencumbered of their most exacting duty as they could have desired, and could give all their souls to the study of drapery and its loftier scenic effects. No man can know how much of life and thought has entered into the development of the perfect toilet he admires. Life, thought, hope, feeling, sentiment, all absorbed, consumed, assimilated, like the subtle juices that rise through toilsome channels to find expression in the gorgeous petals of some tropical flower ; to bloom, be gazed upon, and then to wilt, and to perish. Those superlatively wonderful things always come out in a great burst, and then fade.

Mr. Raynor himself spent the day about as usual, only that the figures in his mind's eye bore a continually increasing reference to the supposable log and sailing rate of the *Hermetic.* If he did not know how long, at the longest, it would take her to reach her desired haven, it was not because he had

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not mentally calculated the miles and hours, with a record of her previous trips to aid him in getting at a probable average. It is quite likely his calculations would have nearly approached a correct solution of his problem if he could but have included all the actual and necessary elements thereof. He had omitted none of which he could have been made aware, that day; but he had made a fatal omission, nevertheless. That is, one that was fatal so far as related to the correctness of the day he set for the return of his absent cashier to the bank and its president.

It would have been difficult for Mr. Raynor to have obtained a clear view of the *Hermetic*, that day, even if he had been upon her deck, and yet she was not consciously in course of preparation for any great thing about to come. She was but shrouded, more and more densely, in the folds of that unusual, inexplicable fog which clung to her. Thus far it had brought with it no noteworthy increase of wind; but a cloud had crept out of it to settle on the faces of the *Hermetic's* entire human company. Even the captain wore a sober face behind his cheerful smile, and all his officers knew as well as he did that something was going wrong with the barometer. Yes, and with the thermometer as well, for there also the mercury was going down as if a chill had reached it through the damp, gray gloom, and some of the ladies declared they were more comfortable under the heaviest wraps and shawls.

"Mr. Morrow," asked Mr. Henderson, in a low

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voice, as they walked up the saloon, side by side, a little before it should have been dark, but a good hour after the lamps were lighted: "the sea is getting pretty rough, and the wind is rising; but do you know why the captain has slowed his engines? We are hardly making three knots an hour."

"I suppose he does not wish to alarm his passengers by telling them, but I see no reason why I should not tell you."

"Please do, if you know. If it is a secret, I think I can keep it."

"Well, then, have you not guessed the reason of all this fog and chill in so low a latitude?"

"I am no sailor—"

"Nor I, but the thought came to me, and one of my friends in the steerage tells me he has seen the same thing before. Sure signs of the vicinity of icebergs."

"Icebergs? You don't tell me!"

"Of course it won't do to go smashing at full speed through an unseen fleet of them. Nobody can tell—"

At that moment a dull, ominous, grating sound came groaning up, from some unknown depth below them, and a strong shudder as of sudden fear shook the vast mass of the *Hermetic* from stem to stern.

"The ship has struck?"

"I fear it is so, Mr. Henderson."

There was no crash; no sharp and sudden shock; but in a few interminable seconds of breathless dread the souls on board the great ocean steamer

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were all aware that her headway had ceased and with it all motion of her machinery.

The world is full of sound that rises perpetually from its multiform activities. Human ears are so accustomed to receive and discriminate the ceaseless waves of that sonorous deep that all exceptional vibrations, however faint, are none the less heard and understood. The miller hears you in his mill; the boiler-maker among his hammers; the dweller by the sea is not deafened as you are by the roar of the habitual surf; the passengers on a steamer soon cease to notice the monotonous voices of the monstrous propulsion in the bosom of which they are borne forward. All the more awe-inspiring, more thrilling, more suggestive of some horrible wrath to come, is the unimaginable silence which comes when the keen edge of God's providence suddenly cuts off sound and leaves the vaguely straining ear all vacant of sensation.

Silence, unbroken, motionless, for a moment, the duration whereof none dared to know, and then, from the white lips of a woman who was kneeling under the central chandelier of the cabin, a long, low, piercing inarticulate cry, uttered with closed eyes and jewelled hands wrung hard together. God pity the poor hearts whose cry, through such a silence, can possibly be other than a prayer.

"Poor soul!" said Roland Morrow, pityingly.

"God help us all," groaned Mr. Henderson, as his eyes glanced eagerly in all directions for the face of his wife.

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"Have you any doubt whatever that He will do so?"

"How can I tell, Mr. Morrow? Do I not know what things have been?"

"Husband! Oh, Mr. Henderson! What shall we do?"

"Be calm, my dear—"

"Do not leave me—"

"Mr. Henderson," said Roland Morrow, quietly, "we shall hear from the officers of the ship in a moment. I am going on deck, and will return quickly."

It was a sad scene that he left behind him, with its tears, and its pale faces, and its confused hurrying to and fro; but he was hardly on deck before the clear, steady voice of the French captain rang through the cabin, assuring all that there was no immediate peril, and bidding them remain below until further orders.

It was a dreadful thing to be prevented from rushing up on deck; but there was reason in it. The sailors had work before them which could be better done in the absence of a panic-stricken crowd.

Men like Roland Morrow are never in the way, and no one hindered his tour of investigation. It needed little more than a glance around the steamer, and he was astonished to find how much he could see. The wind, now freshened to a gale of uncommon force, had swept away the mist upon its angry breath, and the full moon was above the strangely rent horizon.

The ship had struck, but there was water all

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around her. She seemed to have paused in a little sea of her own, where the waves were moderate in comparison with the furious commotion to which the foaming surface was lashed at a few cables' lengths ahead and astern. A look to starboard and one more to larboard, and the puzzle ceased to be. Roland Morrow needed no explanation from the hurrying seamen who were launching one of the boats. They were going out to make soundings of the depth of water on the submerged field of ice between the two mighty ranges of icebergs on either hand; for it would have been almost correct to say that the *Hermetic* had simply run aground, in the fog, and it might well be that she had sustained no serious injury.

Perfect discipline. Perfect order. Cool and judicious authority, obeyed by trained and willing subordination. In less than half an hour the captain understood his position exactly, and the passengers were invited to come up, and admire the surpassing beauty of the scene into which their homeward voyage had carried them.

They came, and they gazed with sinking hearts at those weird, glittering nomads from the Arctic Sea, who had drifted through so many degrees of latitude to stretch a hidden bar across the course of the *Hermetic*. Long before that, however, Roland Morrow had kept his promise to his friends below, and it was wonderful what a warm breeze of relief and hope his presence seemed to bring with it to the woful throng which gathered around him.

"Do you know," whispered one anxious matron

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to the husband, upon whose strong arm she was so tightly clinging, "I am so glad he is here. Seems to me the ship could not sink with such a man on board. Look at his face!"

It was well worth looking at, for it was better than calm. It was absolutely undisturbed and full of peace. It was as if, to him, neither peril nor change had come or could be coming. There was no need to speak of him as courageous, when he was manifestly unconscious of any existing demand for courage. So they looked at him, and drank in with eager ears every rich modulation of his kindly voice, and grew braver and more hopeful, until it even occurred to one of them to murmur:

"He hasn't said a word about fate, and providence, and the wrath of God. He ought to improve such an occasion as this."

Perhaps the icebergs themselves would say enough, when they should have an opportunity, and Roland Morrow shortly vanished from the cabin. He had done what he could there, and his face was as welcome in the steerage. Even more so, for the children were crying when he entered, and so were their mothers. The Roman priests were there before him, and they were doing their duty, as they understood it, faithfully enough; but Roland Morrow did not hear the taller ecclesiastic when he laid his firm hand on the trembling shoulder of one of his fat brethren and murmured:

"Look at that heretic, you coward! I'm glad there are such men, if only to shame us. With hell, it may be, right before him—"

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"He does not know it—"

"Show them that you have some knowledge of what is before you."

The tall priest was no coward, at all events, well as he knew the physical danger he was in, and he looked with almost open admiration upon the white-headed, heretic missionary, when they came, incidentally, face to face.

To his utter astonishment Roland Morrow held out his hand, and it could but be taken:

"God help you, my brother. I think our work is nearly over; but we must work on to the very end."

There was true manhood in that priest, for all the barriers of creed and dogma were crushed like dry leaves in the hearty grasp he gave the answering hand of Roland Morrow, and his clear-spoken, genuine:

"God help you, my brother!" was heard by every ear in all the wondering steerage.

The priest and the prophet looked in each other's eyes for one brief moment, and then each went unfalteringly on about his Master's business.

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CHAPTER XXV.

GOING A FISHING.

KEMP HENDERSON'S return to Daynton from the city was somewhat late in the evening, but he found the pretty, sorrel mare and his buggy ready for him at the stable where he had left them. His arrival at the farmhouse was waited for by good Aunt Maud, in an unconcealed flutter of anxious expectation ; but no one else had seen any reason to sit up for him, and he was able to unfold his budget of interesting news without hindrance of other listeners. One consequence was that he received, for himself and as a sort of proxy for Margaret and her children, the whole of the enthusiastic hug which would gladly have expanded itself over and around all who had caused or were to profit by the improved prospects of Wilhelm von Rahm. After that he went to bed, and if he did not succeed in getting to sleep he was all the readier for the early outing he made in the morning, armed with a slender trout-rod.

Nell Davenport hardly knew what to make of Aunt Maud at the breakfast-table. She could not have received a belated invitation to the Raynor party, and yet her every word and look was brimming and running over with benevolent festivity.

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"Kemp has gone a fishing, my dear. He'll be back by and by."

"I hope so—"

"He does catch more fish, always! Such large ones!"

Nell recalled sundry returns from trouting expeditions, when her stalwart step-brother had displayed little more than a suit of damp clothes, a muddy pair of boots, and his empty basket, but she did not dispute Aunt Maud.

A look into Kemp's basket at that very moment would hardly have given her a text, for he had done fairly well. He had gone a fishing, that morning, mainly because it seemed the one thing most distasteful to him, in the frame of mind his wakeful night had engineered for him. Any other thing would perhaps have been equally disgusting before he had done much of it, but the fish themselves took the matter in hand, and every train of thought he tried to follow was excitingly interrupted by a sharp bite. All he had to do was to project his fly over the most unpromising reach of water, and the moment it touched the surface there was something to be wrestled for. The maw of that basket, therefore, contained strong evidence in support of Aunt Maud, and it would have done her heart good to have measured the larger of those fish.

Kemp was now making longer pauses and taking longer walks between his casts.

"Nothing but trout," he growled, bitterly. "Any fool can catch fish. Creatures that rise to a

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falsehood, and bite at a lie, like so many human beings. Like me, for instance. I'm no better than they are, though, if I hang on, and let myself be landed. I don't know if the barb has caught so that I can't get it out. We will see about that."

Some hook or other was in his mouth, manifestly, and the point of it was hurting him. All hooks hurt, the moment any pull is made upon them, if they have stuck in a tender place. In a man's heart, or pocket, or vanity—worst of all if they are tangled in the proud flesh of diseased corners of what a man vaguely describes as his soul.

He had game enough in his basket, when the brawling brook he last followed led him to the shore of the pond it helped support; but he said to himself:

"Sometimes the biggest of them lurk in the deeper water. I'll try one more throw before I go to breakfast."

The light breeze blew from him, and his gossamer thread swung out lightly and gracefully, to drop its gaudy mockery of insect life among the faint ripples of a gentle eddy, ten yards away. A flash of white and black, clean out of the water, a heavy splash, and Kemp exclaimed:

"Pickerel! I might have guessed what I'd find here. Now for it. He's a big one."

Silk and steel and catgut are strong things, each in their own way, and the delicate machinery of Kemp's fish-killing apparatus was in capital order. The small hook held well, and the furious pickerel rushed away, and was reeled in again several times

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after a style that would have gone to the sporting heart of Lord Bulleshue. Kemp himself was aroused to the performance of the high artistic duty so suddenly laid upon him, and the cloud upon his face was temporarily chased away, Actually fished out.

"I'll have him, yet!"

The angry fish was turning, at that moment, for a last desperate rush, and Kemp's finger was upon the multiplier of his polished reel. He no more thought of looking at it than a skilled pianist thinks of watching his dancing keys, but there came a faint, sharp click—the patent "check" had mysteriously slipped into its socket; the buzzing cylinder ceased to whirl; the fairy line halted in its loops and tip ring; the tapering rod bent double instantly and before Kemp's hand could understand the matter and relieve the strain there followed a sharp snap, and then another.

"Tip and second joint both gone! There goes the line. He's off, hook, fly and all. I'm glad he left me the butt of my rod, but he didn't leave anything else."

Yes, the reel, with the rest of the line on it, and the basket, with all the good fish he had caught before. He had missed that one pickerel, and he had broken his trout-rod; but that was all, and now he could go home to breakfast. There was matter for thought in the termination of his morning's sport, nevertheless, and Kemp carefully drew the accustomed leathern case over the shattered remains of his rod. There was no need of exhibiting the evi-

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dences of his defeat to curious or criticising eyes. Those of Nell Davenport, for instance.

He saw little enough of her, that day; but it was mainly his own fault, for she was studiously not devoting herself to visible preparations for the party, and she may have been willing to have it known.

Just after the early tea provided by Aunt Maud, Kemp was seen to dash away toward Daynton at about the best pace of the sorrel mare; but he left behind him no word of explanation.

"Must be," said Aunt Maud, "he forgot about the carriage—"

"No, I think not," replied Nell, carelessly. "He said he had arranged with Link Bishop to send a man with Link's double carryall."

"That's just the thing. You can have the whole back seat to yourself."

With room enough to spread any reasonable area of dress, but Nell was not thinking of that. An hour and a half later she heard Kemp come in again, and go to his own room.

"It's time he did, I should say. But it does not take men so long to dress."

She was looking in the glass, at that moment, and all she saw reflected there was satisfactory. She had been peculiarly successful in the arrangement of her hair, and it was not the slightest touch of vanity which led her to the unspoken thought:

"If I only had some flowers!"

A slight tap at the door.

"Come in, Aunt Maud—"

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"Kemp is the best fellow in all the world. Just see what he has brought you. Now I must hurry down, and see to my tea-things."

That was as near as she dared go toward the outer edge of a little "white lie," for Aunt Maud's china was not calling for her, and a sharp instinct was forbidding her to stay in that room ten seconds. Ten more would have given Nell an opportunity to recover from her surprise, and say something, and the opportunity was gone forever, the moment Aunt Maud closed the door behind her. Nell could not catch up Kemp's little gift, and rush after the old lady to say:

"Tell him I won't have them."

She could not, indeed, but that was her first strong impulse as she bent her burning face over that basket of exquisite and rare exotics and the sweetly fresh moss-roses. They smiled at her from their wicker nest, almost maliciously, while their magical perfume arose with a power of subtle intoxication.

"This, too? It is beautiful—but I cannot!"

There would be no prettier bouquet in any hand that evening, and the "holder" Kemp had searched the great city for was a marvel of fine workmanship and unobtrusive beauty in silver and gold. It would not quarrel in the least with the simplicity of her attire, nor would the perfect flowers it held; but Nell was ready to cry with sheer vexation.

"This is his revenge," she said to herself. "And yet it would offend him dreadfully if I were to refuse. I could give no possible reason for not

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wearing the flowers, after all the trouble he has taken."

Nobody likes to be beaten, and Nell Davenport could but feel that Kemp had won a sort of victory.

Nevertheless she did her duty by the flowers, and made them perfectly at home wherever she bade them settle, in the glossy folds of her hair or in the unexpected ambushes of her robe. Even the bouquet was admitted to its rightful employment as a chief servitor in producing the general effect which Aunt Maud afterward tried to prepare Kemp for.

"You won't believe how well she's made herself look. It's wonderful. I do say it's elegant. She's the prettiest girl in the room."

"You haven't seen the rest, and I haven't seen her," replied Kemp, half coldly, and the chill was on his manner yet when he received Nell's crimson-cheeked thanks for his flowers and his bouquet-holder, and she was singularly glad of it. She could have been pleased if he had been a little rude, and so relieved her still further from the galling sense of being under obligations to a man she thoroughly detested. Their drive to town was nearly a silent one, for Kemp's seat was with the driver. They were not committing the social crime of arriving too early, and more than half of Mrs. Raynor's guests had been less conscientious. The consequence was that there was a gorgeous throng in the great drawing-room, when the moment came for Nell Davenport's entrance, to step away right

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and left, and make a lane for her approach to the receiving presence of the exultant hostess.

Kemp was instantly conscious of three things. That his step-sister's appearance had aroused a surprised and envious buzz of therefore sincere admiration ; that he was absurdly and unexpectedly proud of it ; and that Nell herself was altogether unconscious of the sensation she had created.

It told well for Mrs. Raynor's training that she could smile so bountifully as she did upon Lord Bulleshue, a minute later, when he promptly plundered Kemp of Nell, and marched grandly away through the rooms with his prize. Kemp himself was at that moment exchanging polished nothings with Katherine, and thinking there was something preternaturally brilliant in her eyes. Even Carlton Forsythe was compelled to admit that he had never seen her appear to better advantage, and her proud mother could have hugged and kissed her for coming out with such exceptional splendor.

It is exceedingly difficult for a male human being to be or appear brilliant at a party. That is not the end and object of his presence. He is there to admire, and not to be admired, and he is a success or a failure in proportion to the amount, expression, and judiciously effective distribution of his admiration.

Kemp Henderson was therefore, unknowingly, a social failure, that evening, redeemed only by the degree of the hypocrisy he practised in a desperate effort to keep up appearances. All the evening, too, he steadily threw the mock flies of flattery

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upon the rippling eddies around him, and every cast was taken as instantly as had been his other casts of the early morning. Even more so, and very pretty little fish they were that did the greedy biting.

He had been studiously careful, all the evening, of the interests of Nell Davenport. It had been inexpressibly irksome to her to discover how and with what revengeful thoughtfulness he provided for her, lest at any moment she should fail to appear a centre of attraction and attention. He seemed to be a positive expert of a high order, in his capacity for doing the right thing at the right time, so deftly that she could not see him do it, any more than she could see a conjurer's hand behind his legerdemain.

There was no blood in the veins of Kemp Henderson that evening. Nothing but fire, and so there came no flush upon his face, even at the end of his twentieth failure to secure a special minute of Katherine Raynor. He could, at many a turn of the swaying, changing talk and dance and drifting promenade, have made one more in the buzzing knots of her miscellaneous admirers. He did it, too, three or four times; but the flies outbuzzed him, for they were natural flies, and nobody was biting at them. Not any of them were only sons of anything equivalent to a national bank; but they could buzz, and Katherine could smile upon them, in a manner so mathematically the same with that she gave to Kemp himself!

There is nothing more useful than fire. Even when it starts in an over-choked chimney it is a

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good thing. If the flue be strongly built and sound, the dangerous white heat does but cleanse and purify, and it will sometimes leave behind it on the walls it tried so severely a glazing upon which the soot is slower to gather afterward.

Kemp saw, at last, what seemed to him an opportunity. Katherine was unaccountably alone, for a moment, her jewelled hand gracefully, indolently outreached, as if to lift the drooping silk of a near window curtain. He was at her side before he knew it, but not before she did.

"Katherine!"

"So glad you came, Mr. Henderson. You will do me a favor. I so much wish to see Lord Bulleshue about something—"

"Shall I find him for you?"

"Do, please—"

"Katherine—"

"Your step-sister is looking admirable, is she not? Lord Bulleshue seems quite taken with her. I will stay right here while you hunt for him."

Sweetly imperative, and the orders of a hostess are the edicts of absolutism intensified. Kemp knew by the fire in his own veins, at that moment, that there was a source he had not suspected for the splendor of Katherine's eyes, and he obeyed.

"Broken to atoms," he said to himself, as he turned smilingly away. "I shall do no more fishing to-night. My tackle is ruined. I won't let anybody see the pieces, however."

Lord Bulleshue was not hard to find, and when Kemp gave him the errand which took him away

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from his ninth or tenth return to the company of Nell Davenport, she saw that in her step-brother's face which encouraged her to tell him she was ready to go home at any time he chose to take her.

"Really, Nell? Are you tired of it so early?"

"Nearly one o'clock, Kemp."

"They'll keep it up for hours yet, some of them."

"Poor Mrs. Raynor. Yes, I am willing to go—"

"So am I, then. I'll have the carriage at the door by the time your wraps are on."

Lord Bulleshue saw no signs of suffering in Katherine Raynor's beautiful face when he joined her, and she had a merry excuse ready for sending for him, but if Kemp had known it his own internal pain was more than avenged.

Katherine had heard, and from the lips of her own father, in the very hour of her triumph, three little words which had stung and spread like the poison of the cobra. She had been just behind him in the doorway when he gazed fiercely and bitterly upon the array his wife had so successfully summoned to worship the social dignity of the Raynors, and the words which burst from his clenched lips had been:

"It'll all go! It'll all go!"

He had all but plunged forward into the throng of his own idolaters, after that, and his daughter had swept smilingly, gracefully after him.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BITTER DROPS.

POLLY MAGOON would have given almost anything, the morning after the Raynor party, for a good hour or two with somebody who had been there. She had utterly failed, during the wearisome flight of the festive evening itself, to interest a young caller in the momentous subject uppermost in her own mind, and she had felt sure, all the time, that she could have made Link Bishop talk about it if he had been there. Now she would have gone over to see Nell Davenport herself, if she had felt well enough acquainted, and if it had not been for an unfortunate idea in her mind that she had reasons for disliking Nell. What they were she could hardly have told; but she had been within an ace of expressing her idea to Link, three or four times, during their recent conversations. Then she had been glad, afterward, that she had held her tongue.

Perhaps she could not have obtained as much gossip as she imagined from her fair but reticent neighbor, and she was as well off to wait till the evening for a copy of the one daily newspaper printed in Daynton. Old Magoon was a subscriber for it, in virtue of having done some tinkering on the press and having difficulty in collecting other

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pay. It would surely contain a glowing account of so important a social event, for the editor had been invited for that very purpose. Further tidings, day by day, would surely filter down from one stratum of life and caste to another, until, in the modified forms of all filtered news, they would reach at last the plebeian level of Polly Magoon's curiosity. She would have to wait, therefore; but it was not a pleasant thing to do, and Polly rubbed her milk-pans a shine or two brighter than usual.

Other thoughts than hers found themselves wandering toward the Henderson farmhouse that morning. Neither Mrs. Raynor nor her daughter were out of their rooms at an hour which permitted them to study the face of Mr. Raynor before he carried its deepening shadows to the bank, and neither of them was in a mood to have asked him the meaning of these. They had won a great social victory, and all successful commanders know that that is the next thing to a defeat in its demoralizing effects upon the army winning it. In case there are no fresh troops on hand and available it is always a good time to go into camp and reorganize, and that was precisely the thing which was out of the question in the present case.

Fresh toilets, fresh smiles, a refreshing atmosphere of freshness, must all be in perfect array to meet the enemy at the very last breakfast-table.

Lord Bulleshue and Carlton Forsythe were men of experience in such matters, and they were kindly considerate in their way. They could not spend the day in bed; but they could come down, when

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the bell rang, for a chop and a cup of coffee, and then they could go for a ride and a look at Kemp Henderson, and Link Bishop, and the country generally. If they had been through any battle they did not seem at all shattered by it; but then, for that matter, neither did the two ladies who so piquantly discussed with them the good and bad points of the assembly, which, Lord Bulleshue frankly declared, was quite an astonishment to him.

"I'd never have believed it, indeed. A small place like this—"

And he never considered what a number of small places had yielded their cream for the occasion.

The moment he and Forsythe were out of the house the discussion they left unfinished took on a somewhat different flavor. More acid, so to speak, and a smaller allowance of saccharine matter. It was just as well the two ladies were both settled in the conviction that Katherine had been, without a rival, the acknowledged beauty of the evening. That was no more than they had reasonably expected, and the next related fact stood perilously near it, in the unlooked-for impression created by Nell Davenport, in her classically simple drapery and her exquisitely adapted natural flowers.

"It was a daring toilet," said Katherine, critically; "but it was a complete success. There is more in that girl than we thought."

"So Lord Bulleshue appeared to think."

"If he had said less about her, this morning, I should have half believed he had pricked his fingers."

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"Men like 'im wear gloves, my dear, whenever they go among roses. 'E is perfectly safe."

She had used her eyes diligently, and her ears as well, and her opinion was entitled to weight; but they had not done with Nell when they had exhausted her toilet. She had made too complete a success, and had been wise enough to go home with it before it faded.

"I wonder at that," said Mrs. Raynor, musingly.

"It was Kemp's work—"

"You don't say so? Did there anything appear out of the way?"

"Nothing at all, mother, but I had a good opportunity, and I made good use of it."

There was little need or use of any questioning; but they both sheered anxiously away from that and another subject which was hot in the minds of both, and Katherine did not repeat to her mother the careless words her father had spoken, and Mrs. Raynor made no mention of the manner in which he had met her suggestion that sundry heavy bills would probably be rendered in a day or two.

All that time Nell Davenport had hardly given them a thought, except as somewhat prominent constituents of an assemblage which had gathered in her own heated brain, more and more throngingly, ever since she awoke from the feverish slumber which followed her unwonted dissipation. She had made her appearance down-stairs at an hour so early as to procure her a gentle rebuke from Aunt Maud, and had been astonished by the

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news that Kemp had already taken a hasty breakfast, and gone over to Link Bishop's.

"He said a walk would do him good, my dear, and so it will; but you must go right back to your room and lie down."

Nell insisted on remaining to answer questions about who were there and how they looked; but her obedience of Aunt Maud's orders was helped and hastened by her vexation at finding how full and flattering an account Kemp had given of her own performances. It was too bad that he should not only have compelled her to accept a favor from him, but should also have presumed to act as her watchful ally, and now to actually praise her! If she could but have thought of something to find fault with in his least word or act! But she could not, and so her half-angry memory went back to its one unfailing resource, and she said to herself:

"Margaret—she should have been there. It was her place, not mine. I don't believe he once thought of her."

There was help in that, but other help was needed, after she obeyed Aunt Maud. Never yet had she felt so utterly alone as she did that morning, and never before had the future swarmed so darkly with unanswerable problems.

What had she to do with English lords and social magnets?

What part or lot had she in the brilliant emptiness wherein she had won the success Kemp had reported to Aunt Maud? Was it a life worth living? That which she found herself personifying

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in Katherine Raynor? A life whose highest expression and crowning result could be realized and glorified in such a triumph as she had won?

Nell's own triumph did but help her to a clearer perception of the unpleasant truth. She felt that those heated hours of envious idol-worship had been indeed an expression, a culmination, an eagerly sought and dearly won reward. She felt, too, that she had been for the time no better than the rest, or any of them—one of a brilliant crowd who were madly hopeful so to live that their lives might continually so be rewarded and glorified. A crowd to whom a social triumph like Mrs. Raynor's party embodied and expressed their highest, holiest ideal of the success which human striving might attain.

She looked the thing in the face till her own grew fiery with the double indignation of her scorn of such a base ideal and of her self-condemnation. She heaped her self-reproaches higher and higher. She was conscious that she had been as insanely glad of her success in surpassing plainer women, ruder efforts at attractive dress, feebler management of less gifted tongues and brains, as if she had been Katherine Raynor, and as if she had openly avowed herself a life-long devotee in all the shrines the more exclusive hills might help society to raise.

Would the case have been different, the problem easier, if she had been wealthy and the unquestioned claimant of a high social position?

She could not answer that question, but it came

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to her with a wasp-like sting, and she sprang to her feet.

"I can at least refuse to be dragged in where I do not belong, and am but tolerated for the sake of others. Mother!"

The strong hunger of that moment for a mother's presence and counsel was but natural to a young woman, a daughter, a fatherless girl, alone and struggling with the saddest, stormiest of all the troubles which can come to such a one. Little she knew how even deeper than they seemed were some of the dark riddles which were slowly taking form for her to solve. They would be asked in plain words before long, and she could only feel their presence now. Every sphynx that propounds a riddle of life to us is a personal presence before it speaks.

"Mother!"

She was alone, and more alone than ever, when memory brought her the face and voice her lips were calling for, and Mr. Henderson's second wife came up to give her decision as to the worship of high caste idols. Saul obtained a more profitable oracle at Endor.

Mrs. Henderson would have been in her element at such a party as the Raynors', and Nell knew it only too well. But then her second husband was rich, with every prospect of becoming vastly more so, and he and she were on their return from that European travel which is so necessary a point in the coronet of every titled American.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

"ARRIVED BY THE HERMETIC."

SLEEP came to some of the weary children on board the *Hermetic*, after their first excitement and fright calmed down into the childish assurance that the ship was only stopping to rest, and let them see the icebergs; but not a soul of the grown-up men and women thought of slumber.

It was a long night, especially the part of it which came after the moon went down, and the one element of strange, wild beauty faded out of their wonderful surroundings. Then the very lights of the steamer seemed to increase the horror of the brooding darkness, and all could more distinctly hear the roar and thunder of the sea as it grappled with the intruding masses of its northern invaders.

The annual drift of the icebergs is a perpetual image of one marked feature of the history of the human race. Its more solid and majestic accretions form ever in the north, building up abnormal bulks only to break loose, float southerly on currents not of their own making, there to melt away and assimilate with the softer flood in whose bosom they cannot long maintain a separate organism.

Roland Morrow was thinking of such things, just before the sun arose, and so deeply that he was hardly aware of the cluster of watchers for the light

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who were grouped around him, until he heard a voice ask :

" Captain, do you think of taking to the boats?"

" No, indeed. Not until we are compelled to. I have had them prepared and provisioned, but I doubt if one of them could live in that sea outside. Beside, the steamer is absolutely uninjured, so far as we can discover. Whalemen and Arctic explorers get out of worse scrapes than this every year."

Comfortably reassuring words were those of the captain, and it was too dark as yet for others to catch the look exchanged between him and the missionary. Their faces were very near at the moment, and each understood what he saw in the eyes of the other.

" He is a very brave man," thought Roland Morrow.

" I would give a great deal to feel about it as he does," thought the steady-voiced captain.

The sun arose, but the voyage of the *Hermetic* had undergone a change. She had become a part, an accidental attachment of the polar drift and its fragmentary, glacial phenomena.

Southward instead of westward floated the iron hull toward a warmer clime, slowly but surely, and, now the sun was up, there was again a fascination in the scene of their disaster. There was no reason now why any should be checked from coming upon deck, and therefore a majority preferred to remain below. Something like cheerfulness began to show itself after breakfast, and many

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hitherto unnoticed carelessnesses of attire were generally corrected. It was curious that a man like Mr. Henderson should take the pains to shave himself, and put on clean linen. He himself must have been dwelling upon it when he next met the missionary, for he said:

"You see, do you? I believe hardly anything escapes you. I understand this matter as well as you do, Mr. Morrow."

"Are you ready?"

"If it comes. Fine linen, white, and clean. There are spots on my spiritual linen."

"So there are on mine."

"On yours? Are they not all washed out long ago—in the blood, Mr. Morrow?"

"The blood is the life, and the life is the truth, and it is the truth only that cleanses. Have you not understood that?"

"Yes, in spite of the blind, enigmatical, theological way in which it was taught me. But never fully until now. Can you tell me one thing?"

"What is it?"

"What of all these who have no truth?"

"I doubt if there are any such on board the ship, and yet we have representatives of many races and almost every class. They each and all have more or less of truth, and most of them love it, too, though in corrupted and perverted forms. The ones to be pitied are the few who hate and reject the very light that is in them. To them it is darkness. Just such a darkness, neither more nor less, than that into which they are about to pass."

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"To remain in it forever?"

"No human being can rightly understand the meaning of the word 'forever.'"

"Why not?"

"Because he necessarily attaches to it an idea of time instead of mere duration, and projects his earthly notion over into a place and state where time, as we have it, does not, and cannot exist."

"Can you understand that? Can you think without the idea of time, and leave time out of your thought?"

"Easily. Time as a measure is a thing which belongs to mere matter; to the unreal and the shadowy, not to substance, to the spiritual, the real, the perpetual."

"That is hardly the way we look at such things."

"Of course, but the shadow's opinion of the substance which casts it does not affect their true relations materially."

"Then you really expect to be more substantial, more positive, a few hours hence?"

"Absolutely."

"It is well enough for you. I hope and believe it is for me. But what a terrible disaster is coming to many of these others. To the women, the children."

The dauntless-hearted man of business, rugged Christian though he was and iron nerved, shut his eyes for a moment, as if something had come before him which he did not wish to look upon, but Roland Morrow smiled. A little sadly, but it was a smile.

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"Brother Henderson, was there anything horrible, anything unworthy of God, in the fact that these souls came into the world?"

"Certainly not."

"Was not the manner of their coming provided and cared for, else they would not be here?"

"Of course it was, and so of their growth and life till now."

"Well, then, they all came into the world with an express certainty of one day being taken out of it, in the process of fulfilling the use and purpose for which they came. Their going out is no more of a disaster to them than their coming in. As to the mere incident of their being grouped and gathered in the going, that is nothing. The arithmetical aggregate of those who pass over, to-day or to-morrow, will be unaffected. There will not be an ascertainable variation in the tables of life and death. No mistake whatever is occurring. The fact that they are here answers all questions to my mind. There is no room for an accident in the close adjustment of the mechanism of the universe. Even those slow fellows, the scientists, are beginning to acknowledge that."

Mr. Henderson listened, and talked, and was afterward astonished at himself that he had done so. He found himself grasping his wife's hand longer than usual, when they met, and then dropping it almost suddenly.

She could hardly have guessed what thought was in his heart, and he would not have told her for anything in the world.

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It had begun in a vague wonder if just such a clasp would be as warm and real a day or so hence, and that had called for warmer, kindlier pressure. Then there came, whether out of the past or future, he could not tell, or whether from memory or from hope, the touch of a hand which had not closed on his for many a long, long day. Was it possible that a first wife and a first husband might also now have hands of their own, and reach them out to those from whom they had been separated?

It was a vain imagination, to be hastily thrust away, as we are in the habit of putting aside those things which must soon bring us their own certainties.

It was at that moment that Roland Morrow was turning sadly away from a futile chat with one of his most highly cultured fellow-passengers.

"An able man, and a good one, doubtless," muttered the latter, "but he is a dreadful visionary."

The missionary's face was looking sharply practical at the time, and his firm lips were moving under his white mustache.

"Every fool on earth believes himself omnipotent in one direction. Nothing can shake his persuasion that he can annihilate heaven, hell, spirits, God, the other life and all it contains, merely by shutting his owl eyes, and denying their existence."

Could such a man as Roland Morrow have permitted himself to be irritated at such a time? Hardly, and yet the most curious thing about his whole demeanor, mental and bodily, was his evi-

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dent incapacity for regarding the present as a more remarkable day than any other. It might even be less so, so far as he could tell, and that which he saw not with his bodily eyes was altogether, to him, as if he saw it. He was not steaming through any fog whatever, as to his inner man, and the ice-floe under them, the bergs to right and left, the raging sea beyond, were matters whereupon he had hardly any further power to dwell.

The bergs were well worth looking at nevertheless; for the two which arose nearest, barely sixty yards away from the rails of the *Hermetic*, were at least a hundred and fifty feet in height, cragged, pinnacled, and crowned with awful beauty.

"Their height," said the captain to one who asked him, "has little to do with their draught of water below. They are sustained by the entire submerged mass of the floe we are stuck on, and nobody can guess what that is."

Careful experiments had been making, from the first, concerning the possibility of hauling the good ship backward out of her icy dock; but there was no sufficient power available for such a pull as that would require.

Toward noon the wind went down, and the sea outside became more quiet. The sun shone with exceptional heat and melting power, and the passengers came up after dinner to watch the multitudinous seabirds that wheeled and screamed around the frozen crags, as if searching for possible nesting room and arguing with one another if those mysterious islands would answer for brooding purposes.

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Possibly some of them had followed that fleet of bergs from the far north, and were alike puzzled and disgusted with their change of climate and the manifest instability of their chosen institutions and their homestead tenure.

The captain and his officers returned from a prolonged exploring and sounding expedition, to hold a protracted council of war all by themselves, and then they sent for several of the more elderly and consultable passengers.

When all were assembled in the captain's cabin and the doors were closed, the commander arose to his feet and said :

"No human power can get the ship afloat, gentlemen, and the bergs are melting fast. We think this floe will break up soon. It may part under us at any moment."

"Then we shall be set at liberty!" exclaimed a quiet man whose wife was waiting for him in her state-room, and whose pale face brightened eagerly at his own suggestion.

"The ship is uninjured, and would float, but we find the mass and weight of the bergs to be all on the sides near us. If the floe splits they will inevitably roll this way. We have decided to put the passengers in the boats. The sea is safe, and getting safer now. The boats can pull off beyond danger, and await the result."

"But you?" said Roland Morrow.

"Our duty is with the ship. The passengers must man the boats themselves, for the present. They are all in readiness and well provisioned. I

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will give you full sailing directions for your guidance, in case we should not be able to join you."

They all knew what that meant, and Mr. Henderson found himself inwardly asking:

"Can any one say the truth has not done some cleansing work upon that man? Are there two fountains of good, of faith, devotion, self-sacrifice, in this universe of ours? Are there a dozen? Has any squad of religious misers succeeded in locking up the only fountain there is, that none but they may drink thereof? Or have these men who die for us in duty's name uttered one name of God, and decided to worship it to the very death?"

He walked out of the cabin, reverently, and the others followed.

"See," said Roland Morrow, "the albatross. I have seen no other. It must be the same."

The shudder which answered him was as if something akin to superstition lingered in the strong soul of Mr. Henderson, as it does, indeed, in the souls of the strongest and wisest, until the day when the truth makes them free.

The men were lowering the boats, and three of the largest were already in the water; but there was no apparent need for any haste, and the news of the intended movement passed even slowly from lip to lip through the wide range of the steamer's bulk.

There were those who were disposed to quarrel with it, and loudly declare their opinion that the ship was the place of safety, and that the passengers ought to have at least as good a chance, and as

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pleasant quarters while having it, as the officers and crew.

The captain could but hear, and a bitter smile for the first time swept across his face. It need not have done so. He was learning the ancient lesson, learned by all who serve and suffer, that there is no other stupidity so dense as that of ingratitude, and no other ingratitude equal to that of selfish and intelligent stupidity.

Dissatisfied or not, the passengers poured up from cabin and from steerage—the former, in some cases, half astonished that no extra allowance of space had been made for them, corresponding to the difference between a state-room and a steerage bunk, and that their selected baggage could not be permitted to follow them into the boats.

"You will need all the room you have for water and provisions," remarked the steward, as he relieved one gentleman of a commodious portmanteau.

"Sir, it contains matters of vast value! It does indeed!"

"So will the boats. You may yet find more value in a cask of water than there is in the Bank of France. I did once."

Sad necessity, that began at so early an hour to know no law—not even the useful and wholesome barriers between different kinds of men and women. Alas, that in a lifeboat, floating between two icebergs, out in the middle of the Atlantic, a wretched, dirty, unkempt Tyrolese emigrant woman, with a baby in her arms, should receive

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a place at the side of a social star, a magnate of culture and caste and fashion, and that all who looked upon them failed to perceive the manifest difference in the importance of drowning to the one and to the other.

The first three boats pushed lazily off from the vessel's side and waited till others should be lowered and filled, and Roland Morrow stood with Mr. and Mrs. Henderson awaiting their turn.

"Oh, it is dreadful! Mr. Henderson, Mr. Morrow, Roland, is it not terrible?"

"God has not made any mistake, Mrs. Henderson—"

He paused then, and looked upward, for a strange, moaning, tearing sound grew sharper below and beyond them, and a muffled report followed, as of a great gun fired under water.

It seemed to the scores of startled eyes that turned to seek the cause of that weird sound as if the iceberg peaks were bowing and leaning toward the *Hermetic* in farewell.

"It has come, Mr. Henderson," said Roland Morrow. "I shall meet you and your wife again, very shortly."

There was no time for anybody to understand the matter.

A few seconds more and the now separated bergs had gained their new equipoise, with other peaks lifted high in air, fresh and dripping, and they were rocking fearfully to and fro, in the swells their own revulsion had created. They had rolled toward each other, as the captain of the *Hermetic* had pre-

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dicted, breaking their icy crests midway, in meeting, and bearing to unknown depths the large and the smaller cockle shells which had waited for them in the open water over the hidden floe.

An hour or so later the bergs had drifted southward, propelled by the undercurrent which had brought them so far from home, but they had left behind them something white that floated almost buoyantly upon the billows. Something whiter still came floating down through the warm October breeze, and a wide-winged bird of the ocean stooped curiously to the surface of the water as if his bright, dark eyes could read the inscription on the gunwale of that empty lifeboat.

The albatross waved his white pinions, and departed, but yet another hour, and the word "*Hermetic*" was read, on the same spot, by the crew and passengers of a passing steamer. They picked up the boat, and they well knew what it meant; for there were the water-casks and provision cases, firmly lashed in place, to tell of immediate use prepared for and prepared in vain.

There would never be any other token borne to any port of the fate of the lost steamship, but that one mute messenger was now carried swiftly on toward the very destination it had been shipped for, with so different an errand.

Yet not a soul on board the *Hermetic* had failed to reach the port for which it had actually set out. The very harbor toward which it had been sailing, from the hour in which its life began to be.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

A SUMMER RAIN.

FRIDAY forenoon of that week was rendered somewhat gloomy for Daynton and its vicinity by a drizzling rain, which had begun during the previous night, and labored to carry over as much of the darkness as possible into the hours pertaining to the day.

Mr. Latimer Raynor and his tried and trusted, but almost obsequious, old book-keeper were sitting at the table in the bank parlor, and they had, as usual, many papers before them.

"He will be home in a few days, now, Mr. Raynor."

"I hope so. I hope he will be in time. I have carried this load for him as long as I can."

"Strange, that a man like Mr. Henderson should have gone to Europe and left things behind him in such a shape."

"He did not, my dear Mr. Gerry. The turn came after he sailed. He is even now in ignorance of all but the over-draft, and he probably supposes that to be provided for. Then, too, his power of attorney to me is so very ample—"

"You have acted under it, sir."

"I fear I shall soon have to take action by virtue of it which will give me great pain."

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"The steamer will be in before the notes are due."

"Only a day or so. I hardly see how he will be able to arrange for so large an amount upon such short notice."

"His stock in the bank would cover most of it, and he has other resources—"

"Real estate? Slow thing to get money out of, Mr. Gerry. I am not sure about his other personal property. His bank stock is where it can be reached under the power of attorney I hold. I shall not hesitate to protect the interests confided to my keeping."

There was something nobly firm and old-Roman-like in Mr. Raynor's face, as he made the last remark, and the mouth of Mr. Gerry opened and shut several times, rapidly but without a sound, as it was accustomed to do over his books, if they troubled him, or in the presence of any sort of crisis, at home or abroad. There was no particle of old Roman about Mr. Gerry. An excellent book-keeper, with just about enough grip of hand and soul to hold a pen skilfully, and conquer unlimited arithmetic. He shortly retreated to his own field of usefulness, and the patrician banker was left to his own devices. A number of these lay upon the table before him, and were occasioning him a more than ordinary rush of anxious thinking.

"Coming home. So he is. I can't help that. It is no longer optional with him whether or not he will stand by me. If I had gone only half way, it

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might have been. Discover it? Of course he will. I have calculated on that. And when he has done so he is under bonds to keep the secret. He loves money too well to let the bank, and me, and all come tumbling down about his ears. I can make him good in the long run. He will really lose nothing. He will see that the bank must be kept good at any sacrifice. I can count on Henderson not to do anything foolish."

Could he count upon himself to the same degree? Or had he permitted his pride to blind his common-sense to the truth that his own personality did not enwrap the corporate existence of the First National Bank of Daynton?

That was precisely what he had done, and now he was calculating that the clear, hard brain of Mr. Josiah Henderson would perceive and accept the same curious identification. He did not reason, but it was as if he had reasoned:

"I am the bank, and as such I have secured myself and my depositors. I, the bank, contain today every dollar I possess, and ought to contain. I am rigidly honorable. I owe it also to the bank and to the world to preserve myself in my other and even more important character as Mr. Latimer Raynor. If I go down, in that capacity, so does the bank; so does Henderson; so, to a disastrous extent, does society, the world, the human race. It must not be. I have arranged it perfectly. Mr. Henderson will be forced to approve of the means I have employed. He cannot help himself. There will be a storm at first, of course. That is un-

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avoidable. Then all things will go on as before, and the world I have saved will be none the wiser."

One of the most perplexing studies afforded by the mind of man is to be found in the phantasms it will mistake for facts, and the jugglery it will employ as reason, when the hour of its insanity and defeat has come. The keenest students of mental and moral anatomy puzzle themselves in vain over the hallucinations which carried the first Napoleon into Russia; another man bearing that name to Sedan; Lee to Antietam and to Gettysburg; and many a lesser genius to the very blunder, of all possible blunders, which his previous career gave warrant that he would avoid.

Mr. Raynor experienced a feeling of positive relief, after he had settled the matter in his mind, and had that talk with Mr. Gerry, and he went home to dinner with a face which added nothing to the other depressing influences of the day. He lingered longer than usual over his wine and chatted more freely with his guests, and even laughed heartily at Katherine's lively description of Lord Bulleshue, returning in the character of a water-dog from a ten-mile stretch on foot, across country, in the rain. Carlton Forsythe was not any kind of water-dog, and neither he nor Katherine gave in any account of the manner in which they had employed their enforced leisure. Mrs. Raynor enjoyed an inward assurance, however, as she looked at the face of her daughter, that no part of those precious hours had been foolishly wasted.

There are few things more touching than the

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confidence which a faithful mother can develop toward the child whom she has brought up after her own heart.

That was not so bad a rain for Kemp Henderson. It kept him indoors, and compelled him to the intense thought which accompanies the hypocritical pretence of reading a weak romance when one is living an intense and terrible one.

Nell Davenport did not take the trouble to absent herself from the sitting-room, and Kemp avoided, with sensitive and jealous care, any appearance of being abstracted or unsociable. He even vibrated to the opposite extreme at times, succeeding in setting forth a species of bitter hilarity which Aunt Maud sweetened to her own taste and accepted as cheerfulness and good humor. It may be that Nell Davenport's resources failed to supply the requisite honey for any such amiable self-deception; but she admitted, mentally, that she was getting a view of a hitherto unsuspected side of Kemp's character There must, she thought, be something worth concealing, when such a man would pay so much pain for the price of concealment. All the while, too, her thoughts were searching back through the incidents of the party, and were proving that Kemp's eyes had not been the only watchful and busy ones that evening. Something had happened there, she felt sure, but her search brought back to her no clear impression of what it could have been. She had even admired, at the time, her step-brother's faultless carriage as a man of society, deeming his performance

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but a shade inferior to that of Carlton Forsythe himself. Lord Bulleshue had been but a timber of unpolished oak in comparison, and the local exquisites had plainly exhibited their provincialism.

Between his novel and his talk, and with the help of Nell and Aunt Maud, Kemp succeeded in getting all the gloom of the day well under the hatches of his soul, and was as miserable as his fondest dreams of unhappiness could have bade him ask. He would have been wretched indeed if it had been otherwise, for what his whole being craved, that day, was pain. The man who has never felt and satisfied that priceless hunger has not yet reached the full measure of his manhood. Multitudes draw cowardly away from the kind of strife which brings it on, and afterward live that which answers them in the stead of life, in willing incompleteness; but Kemp Henderson was not unworthy of his father, and he was no coward. There had been hero blood in the strong-hearted man of business, and it had descended with his good and honest name to his only son.

God has not given to men a kindlier gift than pain, or a richer heritage than suffering, and Kemp was receiving an elder brother's portion as he maintained, to the eyes of Nell Davenport, his mask of sociability. To have done less would have been to have run away, and he fought his fight out, not knowing, even then, how good a battle-ground had so been chosen for him. Before the day was over it was won, and Kemp Henderson knew more of himself and of one other human being than he

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had ever known before. He knew of himself that he had never been truly in love with Katherine Raynor. He knew of her that she had meant he should be, and had deemed him well expended as a sacrifice to her vanity. A fine young bullock burning upon the gilded altar of a cold Ashtaroth.

The many-rooted cancer cannot be considered really a part of the body into which it has grown, but it costs exceeding pain to have it cut and pulled away. Well if all the roots shall follow, leaving behind them only emptiness and a prospect for the formation of healthy flesh. Kemp's delusion had not fastened itself so deeply, and it came away, to the last fibre, greatly to his wonder. He did not know, as yet, what loosening had been going on, for days, and weeks, and possibly for months, until it only needed the last wrench Katherine herself had given to the false thing she had planted, nursing it afterward with the magic of her beauty, and her rare accomplishments, and her high social position.

Pain, and with it another enigma :

"Not love? What was it, then? I took it for that. I told her so, once, and she believed it as fully as I did."

It had been, indeed, a kind of love ; a kind concerning which unnumbered foolish things have been said and sung ; but not the kind Kemp was thinking of, and so he was right, little as he knew about such matters.

It requires experimental knowledge to be really wise on that highest of all wisdoms and to under-

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stand what seed and soil are needful for the production of the fig-tree which was planted by God in the Garden. Until soil and seed are both prepared there can be no love-tree of that sort in the Eden of any heart. The hearts in which there is no Eden can only cultivate the wild variety, and the wild figs have a poison in them for many.

It was a useful day, and the evening which followed had further uses of its own. Never before, since she accompanied her mother's advent into the Henderson family, had Nell Davenport been able to feel herself so unaccountably at home in the old farmhouse, and with that feeling came, at intervals, the even stranger one that Kemp Henderson was a species of guest, welcome or unwelcome, and that it was her duty to entertain him.

Aunt Maud was delighted, indeed, when she saw, for the first time in such company, Nell at the piano, and heard her handsome nephew adding the rich depth of his masculine bass to the softer melody which was astonishing even him.

The good old lady was not at all aware that Nell was singing under protest, and Kemp because it inwardly hurt him worse than anything else he had done that day. Neither of them explained the matter to her or to each other.

Neither did Link Bishop explain to himself the extraordinary vehemence of his vexation, on his arrival at old Magoon's gate, at the discovery of the unpresentable condition of his boots. He had polished them carefully enough before leaving home; but the evening was dark, he was little ac-

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customed to minding the state of the roads he walked or drove over, and his mind had been too busy with various matters to admit of due thoughtfulness in putting down his feet.

"I don't believe she'll mind it, though, and it's just such a night as 'll keep anybody else from coming. I'll go in."

Polly saw him from her window, as he worked at his muddy leather with a wisp of grass, and she said to herself:

"Well, if he isn't getting to be particular. Doesn't he know there's a scraper and a mat? Next I know he'll have himself brought here in a buggy."

There was no tone of positive disapproval in her welcome, nevertheless, and Link's boots had ample time to dry before he completed his first undisturbed evening at Polly Magoon's.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

OPENING GATES TO RECEIVE, ETC.

LORD BULLESHUE declared himself delighted with the experience he was having of American rural life.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed to Carlton Forsythe, that Saturday, "I'd no idea you had anything so charming in this wonderful country of yours."

"No more we have," remarked Forsythe, almost curtly.

"Haven't you, indeed? And you tell me that? Why, I'm like the chicken in the story, I heard it with my ears, and I saw it with my eyes, and a part of it fell on my tail."

"That was when she knew the sky was falling. That sort of thing was exceptional. Doesn't happen every day, you know, as it does in some other countries."

"I don't quite make it out. I'm having a capital time, truly, and I'm blest if I don't believe you're doing the same."

"Thank the Raynors for it, then, and not any normal state of affairs. Wherever there happens to be such a family, and they're willing to make the effort and pay the bills, they can get up any sort of temporary perfection they choose to go for."

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"I see. It's like your game dinners. The whole country swarms with the requisite materials, but you haven't the cooks. Why don't you import them?"

"Can't do it, Bulleshue. It's been tried again and again. Every social cook we bring over turns up his or her nose at what is to be found here and insists on importing substitutes, till all we get is some kind of a foreign mess. Spoiled game, too, most of the time."

"Our friends here are not in need of any imported help, at all events. I owe them a ship-load of gratitude, already. By the way, my boy, would it do for me to pick up Kemp's sister for a drive, this afternoon?"

"It's the custom of the country, if she'll go with you. I'd not bet very heavily on that."

"She's plenty of pride of her own—no doubt of it—but I've no end of courage. I'll try it."

So he did, and so much to the surprise of Nell Davenport that she accepted his invitation as quietly and naturally as if he had been Link Bishop. She even failed to notice the air of semi-embarrassment with which his lordship's request was preferred, and left him talking with Aunt Maud while she hurried up stairs for her customary preparations —and no more, not a ribbon or a stitch. Nell would have been a difficult young woman to please if she had not enjoyed that ride. Lord Bulleshue had obtained the use of Link Bishop's black team, and he drove them to absolute perfection. He was the best of company, and even their meeting For-

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sythe and Katherine, half way down the two-mile level, did not operate as a depressing incident. It did, however, startle his lordship into the only slip of the tongue he made that day.

"Splendid pair," he said, the moment they were well past him. "I'll not forbid the banns."

"Is it a settled thing?"

"Now, Miss Davenport, if you'd be good enough to tell me. All I can say is that if he's asked her and she has said 'yes,' or if he should go and see her father about it, and there was no objection made, and I should tell him he might, and the world thought well of it—that's it, you know, exactly. I'm no further than that."

Very merrily he said it, but with some color in his face, as of a man who had caught himself speaking carelessly of his next friend's private affairs.

Nell listened, and laughed somewhat musingly, and thought:

"Poor Kemp! But then he might have known how it would be. Carlton Forsythe is a millionaire in his own right, and she is an heiress."

So one part of her thought was a perception that her fortunate step-brother, with all his advantages over herself, was as yet upon a narrow and unstable landing of the great winding staircase of social success. An heiress like Katherine Raynor could have widened his landing wonderfully by adding her own to it; but without that it was anything else than a "two-mile level." Kemp had bowed his good wishes for their ride to Nell and Lord Bulles-

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hue, when they drove away; but it had not really needed Aunt Maud to remind him:

"There, Kemp, do you know you never took Nell a buggy riding — unless it was just some errand or other? She's looking real pretty. I do hope she won't take up with any foreigner."

Lord Bulleshue should have heard that, and Kemp's too ringing and metallic laugh of commentary.

"I don't care," expostulated Aunt Maud: "he's a lord and all that, and I've no doubt he has property enough to support him; but he isn't the kind of a man to have a young woman like Nell Davenport throw herself away—"

Again Kemp Henderson laughed loudly and long, and good Aunt Maud picked up her knitting with a little suddenness and a disregard of the fact that her spectacles were buried in the gray hair above her placid forehead.

"Don't be offended, aunty, only I do wish Bulleshue could have heard you. It would have done him a world of good."

"Don't know as he needs any taking down. He was as meek as Moses when he came for Nell."

Kemp did not laugh at that, and before long he was wandering among his trout brooks, as if it behooved him to make trial of the new rod with which he had replaced the ruined victim of the pickerel.

"Kemp," said Nell, at the supper-table, "have you any idea when the *Hermetic* will arrive?"

"Slow boat, they say. This is the end of her

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tenth day out from Havre. She should be in port to-morrow. We shall see them by Monday, if nothing happens. Maybe sooner."

Nell made no immediate reply. She was gazing out of the open door toward the gate. Some careless hand had left the latter swinging wide upon its hinges, and Nell was trying to imagine her mother and Mr. Henderson, fresh from their foreign tour and their ocean voyage, coming through and up the walk to the porch. She tried again and again, and all she could make out was a cloudy, formless mist, in which were neither smiling faces nor outstretched hands, and from which there came no voices. Still, she insisted to her heart upon its being glad that the wanderers would actually open that gate so very soon.

There came a day, afterward, when she found herself looking back, and wondering precisely what gate they were entering, that hour, and what trees and house they were looking upon, and who could have been there to speak with them. Kemp Henderson was glad to have a special and deeply interesting subject for thought, that evening, and the long, dull Sunday which followed. His father's return, he felt sure, would be the beginning of a new life for him. No more aimless knocking about, and, above all, no more dependence. The time had come for him to do something, and he knew his energetic sire would fully sympathize with him in his determination to find, and do it.

"I need work. Hardest kind. Some kind of a fight, with the odds against me. I won't ask him

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for a copper, but he's too good a father for me to go ahead before I've had a talk with him."

With that there came surging up from the hardly suspected fulness of its fountain within him a sudden burst of the strong love he bore his father. There was something floodlike and tumultuous about it, so full it was, and bringing with it such an endless train of memories. All of it sweet water, till one later memory came to poison it, and even Mrs. Davenport's face, trying to crowd in front of the kindlier and sweeter one which had been standing all the while by that of Mr. Henderson, failed to trouble Kemp much, just then. Her advent, made in the tumult of his memory, was an unmitigated failure, and Kemp's filial passion refused to admit her as a disturbing element. He had never before comprehended how tenderly he loved the rugged, honorable, whole-hearted man to whom he owed his being.

"He ought to be president of that bank," said Kemp to himself. "He's worth a score of Latimer Raynors. I don't altogether like that man. It's easy enough to see, too, what he thinks of me. The Raynor blood has had a bad streak in it, ever since they cheated the Indians out of their land."

Link Bishop went to church, that Sunday. At the little meeting-house at Pratt's Corners, five miles from Daynton. That was where the Magoons went, and Polly wondered if Link knew it, as she peered over from the narrow gallery which contained the choir, the reed organ, and three bad boys.

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He knew she was there, at all events, the moment the choir struck into the first hymn, for even those who heard Polly every Sunday, and liked her singing, had never heard her voice arise just as it did that morning. A trifle faint, at first, and uncertain of itself as if it would rather not sing at all, and then swelling defiantly full and clear in a style which happened to suit the hymn admirably, and forced one critical old lady to say to herself:

"We can't have it. I'll speak about it. That there choir sha'n't practise no concert music in this here meeting-house. Polly Magoon can sing straight along like the rest of us or some other gal 'll have to take the air."

The remaining praise was performed less aggressively; but, when the service was over, Polly was slow in coming down-stairs. There were several young men on the broad, shadeless stoop, when she came out of the front door; but she did not manage to see or speak to either of them. It was Link Bishop who saved them the trouble of going out of their way as far as old Magoon's gate.

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CHAPTER XXX.

A VERY DEEP MYSTERY.

THERE was a terrific strain brought upon the nerves and brain of Mr. Latimer Raynor, the following Monday morning.

One, two, three, four successive telegrams came to his desk in the bank parlor, from his correspondents in New York, announcing the arrival of the steamer *Bengola*, a swift ship and a short passage, having on board the empty lifeboat of the *Hermetic* and almost indubitable evidence of the loss of the latter, with all on board.

No boat, it was said, could have weathered the gale and sea encountered by the *Bengola*, and there had been fleets of icebergs in sight for days, right in the path the *Hermetic* must have followed. Mr. Henderson and his wife would never return to Daynton, and Mr. Raynor would have neither help nor hindrance in the further management of those perplexing affairs of his.

It was a matter of course that the proper reception of such tremendous tidings should call for a corresponding effort, and Mr. Raynor arose to the level of the occasion in a manner which astonished even himself. All men who did business with him were accustomed to the perfect polish, the unruffled and unrippling ice of his aristocratic manner; but

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who would have believed him capable of preserving his equanimity so calmly in the face of such an emergency as this?

He did it; and it may be he did it the more successfully because the conflicting emotions within him in a manner balanced each other, and that neither grief nor fear came to the front among them. In fact, his one fear was lest he should unguardedly disclose to critical eyes the fact that he was laboring under an all but overpowering sense of relief.

He had barely conquered, and was addressing all his mental activities to the task of adjusting himself and them to the important duties immediately before him, when there came an opening of the door, rapid and heavy footsteps, and when he looked up the face of Kemp Henderson stared whitely down upon him.

"What is this, Mr. Raynor?"

"My dear young friend! Read these. They tell it all."

The hand which gave the telegrams was steady enough; but the one which received them trembled a little, though it was the broader and stronger of the two.

Mr. Raynor's thoughts flew fast, while he watched the reading of those terrible messages, and he had reached a conclusion and a purpose by the time the last of them was crushed so convulsively

The whole story of the Henderson shipwreck should be told now. There would be no future opportunity equal to this for giving Kemp the facts

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of his position without peril of too close a scrutiny or of having vexatious questions to provide replies for.

Kemp's first impulse was to turn upon his heel and seek the open air, but the voice of Mr. Raynor fell coldly and sharp upon his confused hearing:

"You must be a man, to-day, Mr. Henderson. I have more than that to tell you."

"More than that? More news?"

"Sit down, please. I have an exceedingly painful duty to perform. I may need your co-operation. At all events, you must know at once what I am proposing to do, lest you should afterward condemn me for doing it, or for concealing it from you."

Kemp sank into a chair and listened, minute after minute, like a man in a dream. He did not lose a word that was spoken, or fail to read a sentence of the writings so rapidly and concisely put before him; but his outer man did all that for him. His heart and soul were away upon the broad Atlantic, seeking the vision of a foundering steamship, and listening for the last cries of those whom she was bearing down with her into the black depths of the hungry sea.

He heard, read, understood, and he manfully faced the terrible state of affairs revealed to him. He knew what it meant—an overdraft by a bank cashier, concealed from his fellow-directors and covered by the friendship of the bank president; notes cashed to large amounts without consultation, and now falling due in a disastrous mass upon

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an empty account; a full and ample power of attorney in the hands of Mr. Raynor and a proposition from that gentleman to so act under it as to save, at the same time, the credit of the bank and the good name of the drowned cashier.

"It will leave you penniless, my young friend, or nearly so, but I can depend upon the other directors to keep the whole affair a secret."

"Penniless? No worse than that? Will there be no rumor let out affecting my father's integrity?"

"None whatever. I think you may trust me for that. I loved your father well, and trusted him entirely—as I know he did me—but even for my own sake and that of the institution, there must be no scandal permitted to arise."

"I can only say, then, do all you find necessary. Spare nothing. Save nothing. Sell everything."

"One of these days you can take out letters of administration upon your father's estate, but that would not be possible now. I must act for him precisely as if he were alive."

"Please do so," gasped Kemp. "I think I will try and see you again to-morrow. Meantime you must do exactly as you would if I were dead."

The door had hardly closed behind him before Mr. Raynor hoarsely whispered, at the end of a long, hard breath:

"As if he were dead. That's it—exactly as if he were dead."

Mr. Gerry did not look up from his books as Kemp Henderson passed out; but some of the

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younger clerks cast pitying glances toward him, the very youngest remarking to his next older associate, after the outer door was shut :

" He'll get everything, I s'pose. The old man didn't have any other children of his own—except that daughter that ran away."

Yes, he would get everything. It had all come to him in one great, sudden, overwhelming wave, and he was struggling blindly, suffocatingly, fathoms below any surface—if such there could be to the sea wherein his ship of life was foundering.

He did not go to the stable for his pretty sorrel mare. He preferred to walk out to the farmhouse, and the physical exercise aided him in a swift reorganization of his shattered thoughts and purposes. For a half mile or more from the outer line of the Daynton pavements he could not divest himself of the strong impression that all this must be unreal.

" The *Hermetic* will be heard from. She will come in, some day. I shall surely see him again. It cannot be he is taken away from me forever. Nell, too. Her mother. Poor girl! It is a pity to give her such a shock, when in a few days more—"

That was about the end of the half mile, and it seemed to Kemp as if some person walking with him answered him, just there. Not in spoken words, the slow, imperfect mechanism of ordinary conversation. All men and women who feel deeply, and will take the trouble to tell themselves the truth, are aware with how much greater rapidity and precision they have learned their best lessons

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than they could have received the same things orally.

Kemp's answer came, and he needed no further assurance of the loss of the *Hermetic*. He could employ the remainder of his walk in dealing with his plans for the present and the future, precisely as if his father were dead. Strange, it seemed, that there would be no funeral. No solemn services to emphasize the general acceptance of the news that a busy human life was at an end. Kemp struggled hard with that perplexity, for a moment, and it had its lesson for him. He had known other lives to which there came a termination, and he had always known perfectly well where they ended. Everybody knew, and had been taught, by precept, doctrine, example, where all other men and women went when they died, and what they went into.

Into their graves, of course, to stay there, thousands of years, till the world should come to an end, and the gaseous part of human nature, which somehow escaped the coffin and the tomb, should come back after the less unfortunate part which had been at rest so long.

All that consolation was wrenched away from Kemp Henderson, in his bitter sorrow of the second half mile. Even the sad words "ocean grave" did not help him a particle, though he tried hard to exercise faith in saying them. A dreary half mile, spent in hunting for a sepulchre which did not exist, but at the end of it there seemed to come a sort of answer; a memory of something

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he had read, of another sepulchre, visited one morning, before the sun was up, both by men and women, in which, though they found it, they found nothing but the cast-off burial-clothes the Man had worn, and by them a man with a shining face, who said to them that they might tell all other men, concerning all who should thereafter lay aside the fleshly or woven clothing entombed for them by their sorrowing friends :

" He is not here, He is risen."

Kemp Henderson strode onward with a firmer, lighter footstep.

" I will act then, for him and for myself, not as if he were dead, but as if he were alive. Aunt Maud? Nell? The farm will be enough for them. I'm glad Margaret and her children are provided for."

It was a vigorous, feverish, passionate half-mile, no pace of which measured the selfishness of a thought concerning his own future. Such thoughts would come in their proper time ; but Kemp was acting, mentally, in the place of his absent father, and therefore for those only who could not help themselves.

There was bitterness worse than grief to be overcome before he reached the farmhouse door, for the words of Mr. Raynor came back to him, one by one, and he was forced to see that the outside world could not be expected to share his own unquestioning faith in his father's financial integrity. If any evil appearances should be given out, through fault or folly of the lost cashier's representatives, the

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world would form its opinion by them, and could not be blamed therefor.

"Raynor is right. Seems to me I hate that man; but he is right, this time. It must be kept secret. The bank, he says, will lose nothing. It is an awful mystery—"

The door was very near, when he got to that point, and he had to leave all other thoughts, and prepare himself to meet Aunt Maud.

Strange, that he should have thought of her only; but her name was on his lips when he walked, so faint of heart and shrinkingly, into the sunny sitting-room.

"Aunt Maud—"

"She is in the garden. She will be here in a moment—"

"Nell—"

"What is it, Kemp—"

"I must see Aunt Maud—"

"Have you heard from them? Are they here? Have you seen them? Kemp Henderson!"

She was on her feet before him, and her face was as white as his own; but her eyes met his courageously, even while they studied so eagerly the storm of grief and pity she could see gathering behind the rigid, hard-set features.

"Your mother, Nell—"

"My mother? Oh, Kemp!"

"And my father—the *Hermetic* has gone down with all on board."

The sound which broke the awful silence of the next few seconds was only the fall of a basket of

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grapes from the hand of Aunt Maud in the doorway. She had heard Kemp's tidings, and before Nell Davenport could well adjust her senses to the sudden shock, there was a pair of loving arms around her, and the voice of AuntMaud exclaimed, through short, quick sobbing :

" My poor dear ! Poor dear !"

That was all—that and a shoulder to hide her face upon ; but it was a wonderful gift to Nell Davenport, just then.

Kemp had been surprised into the cruel suddenness of his announcement ; but Aunt Maud insisted, even as she stood there, upon hearing more. All he knew, at least, and at the end of it Nell slipped voicelessly away and up-stairs to her own room, leaving him to unfold to Aunt Maud as much as he saw fit of the further particulars of the shipwreck of the Hendersons.

" You will save his good name, Kemp ?"

" Undoubtedly. It is for Mr. Raynor's interest and the bank's to do that."

" Josiah Henderson is an honest man. He is not a fool either. There's something about this I can't understand. I do wish he was here to explain. I know he could set it right."

" Mr. Raynor showed me the papers."

Aunt Maud's grief had found an outlet that was exceedingly helpful to her. It did her a world of good to burst out in stormy ejaculations of praise and defence of her lost brother. She did not guess, however, the precise nature of the thought she was warming to life in the sorrow-benumbed brain of

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Kemp Henderson. A mere germ as yet, just beginning to stir and crawl, but that would develop, and take on form, and go through all the processes of creation till the time should come for a soul and purpose to be given it.

Great pain is apt to attend the recovery from temporary paralysis, either of mind or body, and Kemp suffered while he talked; but he felt, at the same time, a mysterious internal influx of energy. His senses grew more acute; his thoughts more rapid and searching; his nerves became tense, and the very lines about his mouth hardened into an expression of that which was passing in his soul.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

NOW FOR THE FUTURE.

THE news of the loss of the *Hermetic* created a great sensation in Daynton. It was, of course, simply impossible to accept it as a finality, and settle at once into the assurance that not one solitary boat, or one of the occupants thereof, had survived the catastrophe. All men are tenderly willing to break such tidings gently and gradually to themselves and others, and to invent and offer hope even when there is no hope. It seems a species of cruelty to apply the knife of certainty at once. Still, there was a sober feeling abroad, and there were even those who felt the blow so sharply that they drew down very low indeed their deposits in the First National Bank, and said what a sad blow the loss of Mr. Henderson would be to the business interests of Daynton.

Then, as the hours went by, and the night followed the day, the whole community prepared itself to wait.

Kemp Henderson had hardly left the bank before Mr. Raynor picked up the crushed telegrams from the floor on which they had been dropped. The longer of them was at once smoothed out and sent to Mrs. Raynor by a special messenger, with a brief note to the effect that she need not expect her husband at luncheon.

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The telegram was there at that time, however, and both Mrs. Raynor and Katherine were in a state of preparation.

They had a disaster to ward off, and they could but admire each other for the skill with which the Henderson sorrow was kept from assuming anything like the aspect of a death in the Raynor family.

"I have not met Mr. 'Enderson very often," remarked Mrs. Raynor, "but my 'usband thought very 'ighly of 'im as a business man. This was 'is second wife. I can 'ardly say I knew 'er. A sort of formal acquaintance. Still, one cannot 'elp feeling it. So dreadfully sudden and unexpected."

"I was thinking of Kemp," almost blurted Lord Bulleshue.

"Poor fellow," said Forsythe.

"Poor fellow, indeed," sighed Katherine. "And Miss Davenport, too. She was an only child, and so was young Mr. Henderson."

Her forgetfulness of Margaret was artistically perfect.

"They will have a fine property, I suppose," said his lordship, with a vacant air, for he was really feeling sore on behalf of his bereaved friends, and was mentally hunting up some possible salve for them.

"Property? The Davenports 'ave none. I really know very little of Mr. 'Enderson's affairs. Even Mr. Raynor seems to 'ave 'is doubts about them."

That was almost a slip of the tongue, but no

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attention was paid to it, and the lunch-table talk rapidly drifted away into a discussion of marine disasters in general, with a vague, dull undertone of recognition of the uncertainty of human life for other people. Its unceraínty for one's self is a thing which no one really appreciates until something happens or threatens to happen to the ship he himself is sailing in.

On the whole, the ladies succeeded in putting their guests at their ease as to the effects of the black tidings upon that household and its social relations; but for all that there was something akin to second mourning in the manifest proprieties which must result. Some things in the way of festivity and entertainment which had been sketched or planned would now be out of the question, until the proper time should return for wearing colors.

"It is really vexatious, my dear," said Mrs. Raynor to her daughter, when they were once more alone. "But we can convince 'is lordship 'e may as well stay 'ere as anywherre else until 'e and Mr. Forsythe go to the woods."

"They are quite likely to go a few days earlier."

"On Kemp's account. I 'eard them say 'e 'ad almost agreed to go with them."

"Out of the question now. We must really exert ourselves."

Over their cigars, in Lord Bulleshue's room, the two gentlemen were blowing a dense, blue cloud upon the whole subject.

"Hurry away! Did you hint at that, Forsythe?"

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"Well, not on my own account, so much—"

"On mine, then? It does not come to me, very clearly. Tell you what, my boy, I'll not be a duffer. I'll not leave the place till I've had a chance to shake Kemp by the hand. Never a thing I can remember got in on me in the way this has. It's unaccountable. I suppose it's because I like Kemp, and have been out riding with his sister. Blow to them, you know."

Forsythe nodded, and blew a tremendous cloud of tobacco smoke; but he was personally responsible that Lord Bulleshue should have a pleasant time of it, and he had not made any calculation for the loss of the *Hermetic* or for second mourning in Dayn-ton.

At the Henderson farmhouse the noonday meal was served an hour or so later than usual, and in the sitting-room, by direction of Aunt Maud.

Three places only at the little round table, and all of them were occupied. Kemp's talk with his aunt had continued almost without interruption, to the very moment when the cook brought in the coffee, and rang the bell at the foot of the stairs. Then both the others were silently astonished at the calm, strong, self-conquered air with which Nell Davenport returned to them, and took her chair at the table. They were hardly ready yet for more than a glance at her face, but only one was needed. Aunt Maud's eyes turned away half timidly from what they found there, and Kemp said to himself:

"This is terrible. I had no idea she would feel it at once so deeply."

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Partly because he had so imperfect a knowledge of the source and meaning of that which her calm face refused to hide for her.

Nell had loved her mother—no doubt of it whatever—and she had felt the horror of so losing her, even while she vainly strove to make it seem real, and to believe the tidings true. Her grief had been genuine, bitter, a trial of the first magnitude, but she could have borne it better, she could even have excused herself from coming down to luncheon, if it had not been for one other thing.

She had never dreamed herself capable of such a depth of self-abasement and humiliation.

Such news had come, of the fate of the one human being who should have been more to her than all the world beside, and of so dreadful a blow to dear Aunt Maud and to Kemp, and yet Nell was conscious that her thought and her grief was centred upon herself.

She did not see it at first, when she threw herself upon the bed, and sobbed out:

"Alone, now! All—all alone!"

It came to her afterward in a steadily increasing perversion and exaggeration of its selfishness and meanness, and it was burning like fire in her now while she sat, and sipped her coffee.

There was Kemp, kindly and courteous, attentive, manly, and she could not for a moment divest herself of the thought that he was now the head of the Henderson family. Only son and heir of all. She was under his roof, eating his food, dependent upon him for the commonest necessities of life, and

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she had no longer any claim upon him which her painfully feverish inner eyes would recognize.

"I do not believe he has so much as thought of it," she said to herself, and then she felt more deeply than ever that her meanness might at least have waited till she had sorrowed for her mother as she ought.

Heir of all—and it needed but a few repetitions of that idea before her vindictive and vicious persecutor suggested to her:

"No, indeed, he is not. Margaret's right is as sacred as his, but he does not even know where to find her. He will take and keep, and she may be starving for all he cares or will do. It will be a fraud and a robbery. I will not eat stolen bread!"

Bitter as gall and wormwood was the coffee Aunt Maud's prudent care had made so strong, and Nell faithfully drank her second cup to the very dregs, as if in some vision of penance. It was coffee belonging to the Henderson estate. Part of it was Kemp's and part Margaret's, and it was all an essence of humiliation to the lips of Nell Davenport.

Kemp did not linger at the table. He had letters to write, and then he must drive to town, and post them. He would see them again at tea, and meantime—she understood it—Aunt Maud would have a good opportunity to tell Nell the family secret, and prepare her for the changes which must follow.

"Don't go up-stairs again, dear. "I want you to stay, and talk with me."

"Dear Aunt Maud! I do not mean to be selfish—"

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"Selfish, Nell, my child! There's no more selfishness in you than there is in Kemp himself, and I couldn't say more than that if I should try."

Aunt Maud would have failed utterly as a diplomatist; but she managed to be diplomatically circuitous and dilatory in the conversational process of unfolding to Nell the truth concerning the financial affairs of the Henderson family, and she felt more than a little relieved when she had at last condensed it into one curt sentence:

"It is all gone, my dear. Kemp says Mr. Raynor told him there would be nothing left."

"And Kemp? What will he do?"

"Do? Why, there is only one thing to be done. All the debts must be paid. He doesn't think of doing anything else."

"But about his future?"

"His future? Do you suppose a man like Kemp Henderson need trouble himself about that? He can take care of himself."

Her mind was in a troubled condition at that moment, and her tongue was hard to hold. She did so long to tell what she knew of Kemp's provision for Margaret and her husband! But it helped her to a more rapid statement of his other plans.

"We are to live on the farm, my dear. It will support us well enough. Kemp says he has a little money, and can get into business any day. I do hope he won't go away. And yet I would not be so selfish as to ask him to stay here. He says he thinks the farm ought to go to you."

"To me? Aunt Maud!"

The good old lady was fairly frightened for a

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moment. She had lived herself for nearly all her life on that farm and in that house, and it had seemed so natural that Kemp should arrange to have her stay there during her remaining days. She loved him so well, too, there was no strangeness in receiving from him so simple a proof that he loved her in return. It was almost the feeling a mother might have had over the filial devotion of a tenderly cared for son. As for Nell, that too had been a simple matter of course, the head of the family making just and suitable provision for its members, without raising captious questions as to how they became such. That was the way in which Kemp's plans had presented themselves to Aunt Maud, and she looked up amazed into the flushed face of the young woman who now stood before her, with her hands pressed upon her bosom:

"From him? The last thing he has in the world? Send him out penniless? Do you think I am so mean as that, Aunt Maud Henderson?"

"My dear—"

"Never! I'll teach, sew, scrub, cook. I'll do anything in the wide world."

"Oh, Nell, dear, you wouldn't hurt Kemp's feelings, would you?"

"Hurt his feelings?"

"Not just now. Please don't! He's feeling dreadfully about his father, and about all this. He wants to be kind, and to do the right thing. You won't say anything to pain him?"

Nell was silent for a moment, and the tumult of her wounded pride surged hotly to her very

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temples. What right had Kemp Henderson to assume a father's place, and provide for her? Who was he that he should presume to thrust his unasked benefaction upon her? Pain him? Hurt his feelings?

She caught a quick glimpse just then of the drops which were setting forth from under the rims of Aunt Maud's spectacles.

"I need not say anything now. I can wait."

"He has all a man can bear, Nell, dear. Think of what a blow this is to him. He loved his father dearly. I don't believe he cares anything for the money."

It looked like it. Nell could hardly avoid seeing that. It would be a meanly selfish thing to add to his troubles at such a time.

"No, Aunt Maud. I will not say a word to him now. I think I will wait a while."

She was wrapped for a long minute in a hug which had a sort of motherly warmth in it, and then she was permitted to go.

Kemp came down a little later, and he drove to town to post his letters; but on his return he and Aunt Maud had the tea-table to themselves. She was glad that he did not ask any questions about Nell Davenport, except so much as let him know that the family secret had been duly communicated. There was a look on Kemp's face which had not been there in the morning, and Aunt Maud watched him with a vague idea that he was getting older, and that she had never before noticed how strongly he resembled his father.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

A BOLD AND RIGHTEOUS ROBBER.

THERE had been one collateral incident of Lord Bulleshue's drive with Nell, whereof neither he nor she had taken note, but which was to have its consequences.

It came to pass that day that Polly Magoon tripped out from her father's back door toward the row of beehives in the side yard, with intent to scare from his saucy perch in the cherry-tree the bee-destroying kingbird who was threatening the defenceless honey-makers.

The sound of wheels on the road came up and past the house, and she caught a glimpse of a lady's head visible for a moment only, as its owner leaned forward beyond the semi-concealment of the half-lowered buggy top.

"Nell Davenport! And those are Link Bishop's horses."

The next moment a crooked stick flew viciously past the tufted head of the kingbird, and he gave up his designs on Polly's bees; but she retreated to her milkpans with slower steps than those which had brought her out.

"They're all just alike," she muttered. "It's one girl to-day and another to-morrow. It won't do with me though. But the old bachelors are the worst of all."

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There was never a brighter array of polished tinware than Polly Magoon's pans presented when their last rub was given them that day; but her disposition to bear on a little heavier than common was by no means exhausted upon the metal which tried so hard to reflect her rosy face.

She even nursed it, and took care of it, wasting no more upon mere inanimate objects, and had an ample store on hand when Link Bishop came over to tell her the news of the foundering of the *Hermetic.* No man could have desired a better excuse for calling again a little sooner than might have been otherwise expected of him, and his evident excitement about it did him good service. It temporarily drove some things out of Polly's head—that is, until she had fully mastered the meagre outlines of the disaster which Link could give her, and then it rendered Link himself a little obtuse to the intended effect of any irregularities of Polly's manner.

In fact, his failure to appear at all sensitive to the sharp corners she held out to him, as soon as opportunity and thoughtfulness came to her, nettled her decidedly. It was a matter of course that she should try nettles on Link. He began to feel that he was getting something she had not previously provided for him; but he was as yet absorbed in the Henderson calamity and its effect upon his neighbors, and Polly was compelled to go beyond nettles. She would have been glad of the services of one of her most active bees—if Link could be made to feel a sting—but a bit of a conversational thorn might do.

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"You won't go a riding again very soon with Nell Davenport?"

"No, I guess not. It's a rough thing on her. She's worse off than Kemp. I don't know if she has any nigh kin left."

That was not the kind of answer Polly was trying for, and it came out with a wooden honesty of face and tone.

"It might do her good, though, for you to go over and see her. I would if I were you."

"Me? I go, and see Nell at such a time as this?"

He was staring at her in an amazed, uncomprehending way, which made her long for her bees or for a sharper thorn.

"I'm real sorry for Nell. Her friends ought to stand by her now, I should think."

"So they will. You can just bet on Kemp Henderson. There's Aunt Maud Henderson, too, and the Raynors. Do you know that Englishman —that lord—that took her out riding the other day, is a downright good fellow? Got good sense, too."

"Or you think he wouldn't admire Nell Davenport?"

"That's one thing, sure's you live. There hasn't been time enough; but he's kind o' staying around, seems to me. If he could get Nell to have him."

"Get her to have him? Don't you s'pose she'd jump at such a chance as that."

"She ain't the kind of girl that jumps, Nell ain't."

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"I'm glad of it then. It's high time men learned that women ain't ready to jump for them. I wouldn't turn my head for the best man living."

Polly's rosy face was redder than usual by several shades, for more than one reason.

She had discovered the truth concerning Nell Davenport's company in the buggy, and was not half sure but that Link had guessed or would guess the fact that she had made such a mistake and been vexed by it. It was doubly vexatious now to be so well aware of the latter point herself. Then, too, every word Link had said about Nell Davenport had carried with it a subtle irritation, suggestive of nettles, thistles, or even of the victims of the kingbird. His next response was as stupidly out of place as anything else he had said:

"Wouldn't you? Well, now, if I was a girl, I'd set my cap for Kemp Henderson. He's rich—rich as mud—and he's a good deal of a man every way. He knows enough about even farming to do well at it if he'd settle down to it and get some good, smart, likely country girl to help him. Some evening, after a while, I'll bring him over, and you can get acquainted with him."

"You just needn't, then. He's been to college, and he's travelled round, and he's got his head full of all sorts of things. I know all the men I want to know now!"

It took all the rest of that evening for Link Bishop to smooth matters down into such a condition that his final pathway from the parlor to the front gate was a pleasant one, with the crowning

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privilege of being a little dilatory in closing the gate.

"She's a right good girl," he said to himself, as he strode away. "Got a warm heart, too, or she wouldn't feel to sympathize with Nell Davenport the way she does. I kind o' thought she didn't at first, but then I never did understand women."

Neither did he now.

Sleep came but fitfully to the occupants of the Henderson farmhouse, the night after they were made aware of the change which had come to them. Not even Aunt Maud failed to lie awake and think of it as a disaster, for there had been no Roland Morrow with them to explain it, before it came or afterward. It was not at all likely that he or any of his companions on the *Hermetic* were wasting their precious time in such a manner; but those they had left behind were doing it for them. It is wonderful what oceans of sorrowing sympathy have been given to good people on the sad occasion of their entrance into life eternal. It is a hard heart, indeed, which cannot melt into tears of pity for a newly risen angel on his first meeting with his Master, in the house not made with hands which that Master went on before to set in order for him.

The morning dawned in all the glory of mid-autumn; but breakfast was served somewhat later than usual, and, at the close of it, Kemp remarked:

"I think I will walk to town. It may be late, too, before I get home."

Aunt Maud had been watching his face, all through breakfast-time, with a feeling half of doubt

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and half of admiration, and Nell astonished herself by the discovery that she had been doing the same. He had arisen, now, and had passed out of the porch, on his way to the gate, when he was aware of a light step behind him and a touch upon his arm. It had been a sudden impulse, but it had brooked no refusal.

"Kemp Henderson," said Nell, in a low, earnest voice: "my mother bore your father's name. Is there any danger of a stain being left upon it?"

"Not the slightest. Not so much as a shadow. I will tell you more about it; one of these days. I cannot, just now."

There had been a bare suggestion of surprise in his voice and manner; but they had been as kindly as any woman need have asked. Steady, and firm, and strong he seemed, and Nell turned back into the house to meet Aunt Maud, and hear her say:

"He is a man, every inch of him. So was his father, and his grandfather, and his great-grandfather. Rough, too, they were, in those days, but I've heard old men say that if any fellow put his hand on a Henderson he found a man under it."

The old lady was not looking at Nell. Hardly speaking to her. Only gazing with tearfully proud eyes after the retreating form of the last man of her family, and rejoicing that he was a man.

Strange it was, indeed, that the next feeling which came to Nell herself was one of safety. She did not try to guess from what or whom, but the feeling was there. Just, perhaps, as men in camp feel safe when they are told that the outer line is

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held against their possible assailants by some crack regiment whose very name is obnoxious to them, but whose fighting qualities they are sure of.

"If thar's anything on earth I do hate," remarked a western Union soldier in the civil war, "it's a cussed New England Yankee; but thar ain't no discount on thar fightin', into a tight place. I got a'most to lovin' on 'em when they kem up upon the left, yisterday, the way they did."

Kemp Henderson was on his way to town to do some hard fighting in a tighter place than those he left behind him had any idea of, and he was well entitled to their parting blessing.

It was after ten o'clock when he reached the bank; but Mr. Raynor, he was told, had gone out for a short time, on some business or other.

"I will wait for him, Mr. Gerry."

"Will you step into the parlor?"

In a moment. Mr. Gerry, my business relates to those notes of my father's. They are to be paid to-day. Please let me look at them."

"Certainly. Walk right in here. I have them all at my desk. Mr. Raynor's power of attorney, too."

The old book-keeper's mouth was opening and shutting rapidly, and more words had come from it already, in his nervous haste, than he had by any means intended. He should have shut it, and kept it shut until Mr. Raynor's return; but then Kemp Henderson had a species of right to look at those papers, and it would have been difficult to have found a plausible excuse for delaying, much more for refusing him so simple a privilege.

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He took them up, and examined them, one by one, but he did not even make, as Gerry expected he would, a pencilled note of their amounts and dates. He was satisfied, he said, and so he was with a cursory examination of the larger document, by virtue whereof Mr. Latimer Raynor was acting in the stead of Josiah Henderson, to all intents and purposes as if he had been the latter gentleman, present in his proper person.

"My father's deposit account, now, if you please?"

"Certainly—"

Mr. Gerry felt that he was getting along swimmingly, if this was all Kemp wanted, and he almost officiously produced the checks drawn for each and every item charged to Josiah Henderson's account, before and since his departure for Europe. Kemp did linger a little over some of those checks; but he again neglected to make any memoranda, and he ended by saying, courteously:

"Thank you, Mr. Gerry. I will go into Mr. Raynor's room and wait for him."

"He cannot be gone many minutes, Mr. Henderson. Between you and me, I think he went out to see two or three of the bank directors on this very business. He was at it all last evening and early this morning."

"Ah! Then there may be just so much less for me to do."

"Mr. Raynor is a very prompt and energetic man of business, Mr. Henderson—very."

Kemp nodded his head; but he said nothing, and

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in a moment more he had closed behind him the door into the bank parlor, and was seated at the table, writing.

It was but for a minute.

No eye less watchfully observant than Kemp's would have noticed, perhaps, the slight start of hesitation which marked Mr. Raynor's entrance and his discovery of the preoccupation of his private room.

"My dear young friend—the very man I was wishing to see. I think I have it all arranged. It will be neither better nor worse than we calculated upon, in our interview of yesterday."

"You have been able to make the necessary negotiations?"

"Perfectly. I shall have to make advances myself, and carry a part of it for a while; but I am amply secured. I shall not lose a cent."

"I am glad of that. And my father's good name will be protected—perfectly?"

"Absolutely, my dear fellow. Not an imputation!"

"That is as it should be. I have fully determined to protect my father's honor, at any cost; but how about your own, Mr. Raynor? Who will protect you?"

"Me, sir? Mine? What do you mean sir?"

It would have been a shout, if it had not been so terrifiedly husky, as Mr. Latimer Raynor sprang to his feet, from the chair in which he had so dignifiedly settled himself.

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"Sit down, please, Mr. Raynor. What I mean is this. I have been examining the papers, notes, checks, power of attorney. The forgeries are admirably well done. I think they would deceive even the board of directors—"

"Forgeries!"

"That is, they would pass them, offered by you, or by my father himself. Not if their attention were called to the variations. A hint would be quite enough."

"Forgeries? Checks—notes—attorneys—papers, forgeries—"

"Everything cashed by the bank since my father sailed for Europe. I shall, of course, expect you to make good the overdraft as well as the other items—"

"Ruin! Utter ruin!"

"Not if met with courage, and a determination to do the right thing. There are but two roads here, Mr. Raynor, and one of them leads to Sing Sing. I must now bid you good morning, Mr. Raynor. Your future is in your own hands, not in mine."

The aristocratic banker lay back in his chair, voiceless and motionless, with his hands pressed hard upon his face; but the instant he heard the door close behind Kemp Henderson he sprang to his feet, rang the silver gong on his table, and called for Mr. Gerry.

"Those notes of Henderson's, Mr. Gerry, and the power of attorney. You may bring me all his checks and vouchers."

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In three minutes more he was again remarking to Mr. Gerry:

"The power of attorney is missing! Oh, yes, that is all right. I think young Mr. Henderson has it. That will do, Mr. Gerry."

He was right about the fact; but no eyes were permitted to see the crushing effect of it which came to him, the moment he was once more alone.

"He has it! He has it! A rope around my neck! A knife at my throat! The audacious, daring, unprincipled villain! He is a robber!"

Kemp did not pause within the limits of Dayn-ton. He walked on and on into the open country, with a strong instinct driving him. It would require miles and miles of vigorous walking to reduce his body and mind to a condition in which he would be able to study calmly the thing he had done and the other things which were thundering at his heart's door, and demanding to be done quickly.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

A BROKEN NET.

LORD BULLESHUE and Carlton Forsythe had not been seen by any member of the Raynor family that day. Their joint instincts had unerringly advised them that no better opportunity could come to them to troll for pickerel in a lonely lake among the hills, fifteen miles and more from Daynton, and they were on their way to it while it was yet the dark hour which comes before the dawn. It would be night again, they left word, before they would reappear, and Lord Bulleshue remarked concerning their destination :

"Nobody around there'll have heard about the shipwreck."

"No, indeed. I fancy it's not a place where the pickerel take the newspapers."

"Nor the people either. Link said, when he told me of it, it was a place so out of the way they forgot it when they surveyed the county. Left outside of anything, you know."

"Good fishing, though."

"Hope the road'll take us to it."

"Think not. I heard Link say the road died out on the way."

"Died of loneliness, eh? Well, it won't make much difference if it keeps as dark as this. No

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further reference to the *Hermetic*, my boy. Put it in Coventry."

It was an unpleasant subject, no doubt, but it was all the talk of the good people of Daynton. The depositors of the First National Bank never before came and went in such a stream, stayed so long, or had so many questions to ask.

There was no fear of any such a thing as a run, for everybody knew that Mr. Latimer Raynor was in the inner office, colder and haughtier than common, and he had a genuine English lord visiting at his house, and he himself was rich enough to buy the bank over and over again, nobody knew how many times. No harm could come to a bank which had such a man to its president. The popular mind felt easy on that score, with an unformulated mist of an idea in its foggy back-head that if Mr. Raynor had been on board the *Hermetic* she would never have gone down. Certainly not until she had paid her depositors.

The great man was very great that day. Even Mr. Gerry looked upon him with a conscious increase of admiration, now he was sure that a full understanding had been obtained with Kemp Henderson, and that all was well.

Probably Kemp had been aware of the state of affairs from the first, and he and Mr. Raynor had been acting in concert.

Had not Mrs. Gerry said something, several times, about an old affair between Kemp and Katherine Raynor? Of course she had. All a

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family matter, therefore, and not at all the business of the outside world.

Mr. Gerry shut his mouth over it as if he never meant to open it again, except at meal-times and at the bottom of a full column statement of large figures.

It was four o'clock when Mr. Raynor locked up his desk, and permitted the lower orders to see him set out for home in his carriage. It must have been a greater treat than usual to them that day.

The carriage had waited for him nearly an hour, but nobody knew what it cost him to enter it. He had left matters in fairly good shape behind him at the bank; but his soul was moving faster than his carriage, and dealing now with certain matters which were before him.

"They must know," he snarled fiercely through his set teeth. "I must tell them. It all depends on her now."

The faces which met him were such as he had provided for by his all but jubilant demeanor when he left the house that morning; but they were quick to observe and imitate the terrific change upon his own—the change he had hidden so carefully all day from the eyes which had admired him at the bank. The mask barely lasted until he, and his wife, and Katherine could make themselves all alone and private in the library.

"What is it, Mr. Raynor? You frighten me!" exclaimed his wife, while Katherine doubted whether to express her wonder at the intentness with which

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her father gazed upon her face. She, too, was frightened.

Then it seemed as if the deep, hollow, unmodulated voice which replied to them, "I will tell you!" came from far away, and did but use Mr. Raynor as a kind of speaking-tube.

He told them, and it was a tale which did not require much time in the telling, poured forth as it was by that same voice, so rapidly, succinctly, horribly precise and clear.

"Ruined! ruined!" groaned Mrs. Raynor, as she bowed her head upon the library table. But Katherine stared steadily, whitely in her father's face, and did not utter a word until he ceased speaking.

"Have you told us all, father?"

"Is not that enough? Kemp Henderson has our fate in his hands. My property, good name, liberty, life itself. He is a man of iron. I have found that out."

"Oh," sobbed Mrs. Raynor; "I am so glad we invited 'im to the party. We 'ave always treated 'im well. 'E is a good-'earted young man."

"Good-hearted! There is more flint in him than there was in his father. There is just one hope left."

"'Usband! what is it?"

"Katherine can do what she pleases with Kemp Henderson. I am not a blind man. I see some things. She can save herself and us if she will."

"If I will what, father?"

"If you prefer not to inherit poverty, bank-

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ruptcy, shame, dishonor, scorn, contumely, the jeers of the mob, and the loss of everything a woman loses when people point at her and say she is a pauper and her father is in jail, breaking stone, in a convict's striped jacket."

It was the same hollow voice, metallic and unmodulated as ever, but dense with bitterness and the passion of fear which crystallizes into despair.

Katherine turned shudderingly away from the questioning fire in her father's eyes, and her mother murmured, audibly:

"Oh, if Carlton Forsythe had only proposed!"

"Ha!" laughed Mr. Raynor. "Men break silly engagements with the daughters of convicted forgers."

There was an unconscious, all but imperceptible emphasis upon the word "convicted;" but it was the minute condensation of a world of worldly truth.

"You may trust me, father. If it depends upon me, you shall not be convicted."

They had been in the library longer than they knew of, and at that moment the housekeeper's warning bell announced that dinner was ready. The sound came as a timely relief, but they were glad enough that it did not summon them to smile in the faces of guests.

Not but that they would have made the effort, and probably with fair success; but it was much easier to be a family circle, with a great secret to draw them closer together.

Katherine's face was brilliantly beautiful, although her color was but slightly raised. That

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which was going on within her expressed itself mainly through her eyes, and even her mother turned her own from these, when she put her arm around her, and led her to the dining-room.

Neither mother, nor father, nor daughter knew exactly what might be meant by the desperately reassuring words of the latter; but Mr. Raynor, at least, seemed to feel as if a load had been lifted from his shoulders, and he actually ate a hearty dinner.

It was necessary to discuss the absent sportsmen and their pickerel and other things of public rather than private importance, in the presence of the servants. Besides, there would be plenty of time for further counsel and conversation before the return of their guests, and so the Raynors fought bravely through from soup to coffee, like the well-trained, high-bred, blue-blooded, upper-caste people they really were.

They even lingered, as if loath to adjourn to the library or the drawing-room, until something of nervousness began to reappear on Mr. Raynor's face, and the fire burned a little low in Katherine's eyes. It was full seven o'clock when the tinkle of the front door bell sounded faintly in the dining-room.

"I knew it," gasped Mr. Raynor. "I felt sure he would come. Katherine!"

"I will be in the parlor, father. If it is Mr. Henderson, he will ask for you, and I must see him first."

Her mother looked at her in silent amazement.

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With all her superior age and her high connections in London, she felt that she would be quickly beyond her depth in the hot water her daughter walked into, so martyr-like and fearless. She could not so much as guess what might be the latter's plan for getting through it.

Nor, to tell the full truth, did Katherine Raynor herself see, understand, purpose, an inch in advance of the one thought branded upon her soul by the awful words of her father.

She knew precisely what he had done. She understood that he had sacrificed everything, with unhesitating courage, to the maintenance of their family rank and position in the world, and in her heart of hearts she did not utterly condemn him. She could therefore do no less than imitate him, especially when, should she refuse to do so, the precious fruit of his sacrifices would be so surely lost to her. The resulting purpose was formulated as yet only to the extent that she would meet Kemp Henderson, and his card was already in her hand when she passed into the drawing-room to which the servant had conducted him.

He had not taken a seat, and there was surprise in the tone with which he said :

" Miss Raynor, I called to see your father, on business of special importance."

" Oh, Kemp, I am so sorry for you ! I could not help coming in to tell you so."

Her jewelled, perfect hand was out, and her sweet voice fairly trembled with emotion, but for once, once only, Katherine Raynor failed.

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She had come for the snaring and the subsequent management of a sentimental boy, and a deep-eyed MAN stood before her. A man from whose composition the last remains of false sentiment, vague idolatry, unreal love, had been burned out like so much dry grass by the sweeping fire which had been blown through it.

Deep eyes were Kemp's that day; for the instant they encountered Katherine's they telegraphed to his brain:

"She knows it all. You must be upon your guard with her. She will try to make a fool of you again."

"Thank you, Miss Raynor. You are very kind."

"It is so dreadful!" came from her lips in a faintly pitying, sweet gasp.

She was sinking upon a sofa, and half motioning him to a seat beside her, in the careless freedom of old familiar, sympathizing friendship, but his reply was made quite audibly:

"Thank you. No, Miss Raynor, I will not sit down. I wish to see your father. Will you think me rude if I also take advantage of an unexpected opportunity—the last I may have for a long time—to ask a favor?"

"A favor, Kemp?"

"If you will pardon me; it is a little thing; you have doubtless forgotten it; some few old letters, if you have not burned them, and a ring; will you be kind enough to let me have them now?"

The terror rose from her heart to her lips and

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eyes while he was speaking, and she sprang to her feet. Both of her hands were outstretched now, as unguarded persons ever will reach out their hands when they are pleading for mercy.

"Kemp! Kemp Henderson! You do not mean it? You will not destroy us?"

"If you mean the letters, yes. If you mean anything else, no. Your father is entirely safe, if he acts the part of an honest man toward mine. I will even help him, and prevent him from hurting himself, if he will let me."

"Hurting himself?"

There was a thought of physical injury, self-inflicted, in her agitated mind; but Kemp went calmly on:

"By refusal or delay in doing his duty. You need have no fear, Miss Raynor. But you will grant my request? It is high time all traces of so foolish an affair should be obliterated. It was amusement for you, no doubt, and it has done me no manner of harm."

It would have been balm to her soul at that moment if he had declared, or if she could have looked in his placid face and believed that his boyish love for her was torturing him unutterably to that very hour; but the truth of his words was so manifest that they sounded flat and commonplace, and she blushed for very vexation as she turned away and hurried out of the drawing-room. Her mother met her at the head of the stairs, and her father was but a step beyond, for they had both guessed at the best spot to await her report.

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"Katherine?"

"He has promised—"

"And have you?"

"I? No, indeed! Father, he wants to see you, but do not go in just yet. I shall go down again in a moment."

Mr. and Mrs. Raynor must have been under some kind of spell, or they would have known how undignified it was for them to stand there at the head of the stairs while their daughter darted into her own room, and as quickly came out of it. There was no time to ask the meaning of her errand, if they had, either of them, had the courage for it, and there they lingered, gazing down the stairway, while she once more swept into the presence of her old-time admirer.

She was statelier now, and appeared to excellent advantage when she held out to him, with a sweet, sad smile, in memory of the long ago, a small, blue-ribboned packet.

"They are all there, Mr. Henderson. Somehow I never could bear to burn them."

Voice, manner, smile, all were performed to absolute perfection; but Kemp Henderson was not performing anything, and his acceptance of the packet was as simply unconcernedly polite as if it had contained a spelling-book, or say a glove he had accidentally left behind him at some previous call.

"Thank you. Is your father aware—"

"He will see you presently. We had but just risen from dinner. Lord Bulleshue and Mr. For-

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sythe are away fishing. Oh, Mr. Henderson, you will indeed be merciful?"

"Why should I be anything else, Miss Raynor? My father's good name must be utterly protected, but I have no duty beyond that. I shall do precisely as I believe he would do if he were here."

His voice grew bell-like, deep, and mournful in spite of himself, and Katherine's heart grew strong within her, for she felt that he would keep his word. Not, however, that she could think far enough to comprehend the fact that Kemp's promise of mercy was made to his own father, not to herself.

"Oh, I do thank you so! My father is coming. I must go now. Thank you, Kemp, I shall rely on you. Good-by!"

"Good-evening, Miss Raynor."

There had not been a flaw in her demeanor from the first to last; there was not now, as she gracefully retreated from the battle she had fought and won; but the victory, complete, final, indisputable, remained with Kemp Henderson in spite of the comforting assurance she was once more able to carry to her anxious awaiters at the head of the stairs.

Mr. Raynor received it with a singularly vacant look, and at once began to descend, but Mrs. Raynor threw her arms around her daughter's neck in a passion of grateful tears.

"My darling! Such a sacrifice! What will Carlton say?"

"I have made no sacrifice, mother. It is all

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right. There are not many such men as Kemp Henderson. Do not speak of Mr. Forsythe! I do not want to see him!"

Mrs. Raynor could hardly believe her eyes and ears. Her queenly daughter bursting into such a torrent of incoherences, and then tearing away from her in a passion of genuine, hot tears. She had never dreamed of such a thing as that, except perhaps as a penalty for accepting a poor man instead of a rich one, and it was clearly understood that Kemp had not even proposed.

Longer waiting at the head of the stairs in the doubled undignity of loneliness, being out of the question, she gathered stateliness for the emergency, and swam down into the library to watch for her husband.

He, brave man and self-controlled, had taken it for granted that Kemp had come for a report of the day's transactions at the bank, as he had, and at once proceeded to give the details, as if it had been an ordinary business transaction.

"It was necessary to use your father's shares of stock in the bank."

"All of them?"

"All of them. But I will give you real estate security for that. Forced sales now would look badly and lead to inquiry. I have the papers nearly completed, and you can have them to-morrow. Mrs. Raynor signs with me, of course."

"Perfectly satisfactory. I do not wish to retain a share of stock in that concern. The notes?"

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"All taken up and paid, or replaced with other paper. I deemed it wise to destroy them at once. You should do the same with the power of attorney and the checks."

Kemp looked at him in silent amazement.

Cold, haughty, self-possessed, polished, but the incarnation of unutterable impudence. Could the man be sane?

"All that will be attended to at the end of this business, Mr. Raynor. You have not provided for the overdraft and the remaining sums drawn by you in my father's name."

"I really cannot afford—"

"That will do, Mr. Raynor. I will go now. I will give you till the close of bank hours to-morrow."

"It is hard. You insist upon it?"

"Security only. You need not sacrifice anything hastily."

"Leave me a pauper!"

"Not so badly off as that, I think. Only in the position of a man who has been compelled to use his own money instead of that which did not belong to him."

It was hard. Hard, too, to have the matter placed in so clear a light; but there was no help for it, and the secret would be kept.

The interview was not a long one after that, and Kemp retired at last, with a strong impression that he had an enigma on his hands.

"How did he come to do it?" he said to him-

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self, when he was once more in the street. "What did he do it for? So sure to be found out when my father came home. Such idiotic folly!"

He could dwell upon it no more just then, however, for his thought had brought back to him with crushing force the fact that his father would not come.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET.

WILHELM VON RAHM had taken hold of his new duties with more enthusiasm than he had known was in him, and Messrs. Bond & Co. were more and more delighted daily with their remarkable acquisition. It was natural that they should make more minute inquiries concerning him and his connections, and the senior partner was therefore among those who had a right to be startled by the news of the loss of the *Hermetic*.

"I declare! That's the ship! Von Rahm's father-in-law was one of her passengers. Rich, very. What a blow it will be to Mrs. von Rahm."

It was not to be regarded as a blow to the firm, however, that the man in charge of so important a branch of their business should have a rich wife. That is, that he should be within reach of capital, resources, and all that sort of thing. And so, although it was very soon for a new clerk to be granted a day off, and very inconvenient to spare him, Von Rahm's request for time to at least conduct his wife safely to Daynton was almost anticipated.

"Sad affair, Mr. von Rahm. Convey our expressions of condolence to Mrs. von Rahm, if you please. Do you say you will return by the evening train?"

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"Certainly. We go early to-morrow morning. I thank you, indeed, for your considerate kindness."

A little stiff, but absolutely the correct thing, and Kemp Henderson's letter to his sister had made no mention of any other disaster than the drowning of her father. Nothing, that is, which could diminish her importance in the financial eyes of Messrs. Bond & Co.

Perhaps her evening with her sorrow and her memory was none the less bitter for not having, as Kemp had, the sustaining excitement of a good fight fought and won for the good name of the dead and the future welfare of the living.

It was no part of his purpose on leaving the Raynor mansion to arrive at the farmhouse at an early hour, and he had no idea of the nervous eagerness with which its occupants listened to the occasional wheels upon the road as they came out of the silence, drew nearer, and went by.

Aunt Maud said for him:

"It is too bad, isn't it, Nell, that Kemp should have such a load to carry at such a time? I don't see how he can attend to any business. But then he isn't an ordinary kind of man."

"Indeed he is not. He is really doing nobly."

There was no help for it. Nell would have felt as if she had told a lie if she had refused to say as much as that, and she was rewarded by a beaming look of gratitude from Aunt Maud, and the further remark:

"I do so wish he would come home. The

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whole house seems to feel kind o' lonely without him."

Nell was hardly called upon for any comment, this time; but she was kind to Aunt Maud, and said:

"I cannot understand it at all. The whole affair. Perhaps he will tell us more about it when he comes."

He did not come, however. Not, at least, until his long stroll through the darkened streets of Daynton, and his longer drive through country roads behind the sorrel mare, had given him time for much thinking and for the assurance that only Aunt Maud would be up to welcome his return.

"Nell stayed up till pretty nigh eleven, to keep me company: I wouldn't let her any longer. She feels it terribly. Kemp, are you sure you've got everything all right, and no harm'll come to Josiah? To your father?"

It was to her, truly, as if her brother might feel, even in his new home, the scorch of a brand upon his integrity; but Kemp answered quietly:

"Everything is arranged. All the danger is over. Is that enough, Aunt Maud? Do you care to hear any particulars?"

"Why, no. Why should I? Do you suppose I would understand it? Not now, any way. Go to bed, do. My dear boy, how tired and worn-out you look!"

Very little more could he have told her, if she had desired it, for Mr. Raynor's secret was not the property of the Henderson family. Only a skele-

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ton for the exclusive Raynor closet, with a key in the hands of Kemp Henderson.

Bed was the proper place for the latter, and it may be his overtaxed body and brain would have insisted on as heavy a slumber as they did, even if he had known the further history of that evening in the household temple he had shaken, so like a merciful Samson, there in Daynton.

Bulleshue and Forsythe brought home quite a brilliant catch of pickerel, with enough of incident in the catching of them to serve for talk at the cosey supper, over which Katherine Raynor presided for them, an hour or so after Kemp's departure. She and her shaken parents had spent the interval in getting ready for that supper and its talk; but Katherine was the only one of the three who had triumphantly succeeded. The other two were well content to linger in the library until Lord Bulleshue should come in, as he eventually did, to express his transatlantic wonder over the primeval wildness of the bit of water he had done his trolling on that day.

Perhaps a greater degree of relief, or the consciousness of it, had come to Mr. and Mrs. Raynor than to their daughter, and so a stronger reaction had made them its victims. At all events Katherine had the field to herself, and the young men were willing it should be so.

She had been guilty of but one error that evening, and she experienced something like regret for it. She had permitted herself to feel too deeply, and

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although her mirror told her it had left no visible traces, she was conscious of a loss of power.

She had felt the terror of her father's danger; the peril in which the conduct forced upon him by his losses had involved the family and all that was dear to them. She had felt, somewhat, the shock of discovering Kemp Henderson in what was to her his new character; but her very effort to pull a little upon the worn-out net she once had thrown over him had brought her a greater shock than either of the others.

What if, in being compelled to net Kemp Henderson, she had thrown away Carlton Forsythe?

The question had presented itself unavoidably, and the answer to it had been a revelation in the face of which she shut her eyes and drew her breath hard. All other idols in her glittering pantheon of world worship seemed to draw near each other, coalesce, melt into one, the head, type, representative of all, and she dared not open her eyes lest she should see the face of the one idol she might even yet lose.

She was more than herself, therefore, at the supper-table, and Carlton Forsythe drifted from it with her into the great, empty drawing-room, like a man under a spell, momentarily oblivious of Lord Bulleshue's thoughtful and good-natured drift into the library.

Ruin, dishonor, a stained name, family disgrace, if these were to be her portion and he should ignorantly beg for them, did she love him well

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enough to refuse him the hand which might bring him such a dowry?

She was not heartless—far from it—and that question came to her; but once more she shut her inner eyes, for those of her body were now flashing upon his, and she saw that he was yielding, minute by minute, to the passionate magnetism her soul poured through them.

She could not think of such things now. Kemp had promised. Her father would be safe. The future was secure. The present—he was the present, and the future too—and when the moment came, and she told him that she loved him, he was thrilled from head to foot with the bewildering, passionate truth that burned in her blushing confession.

He had hardly dreamed of happiness so great, for he had feared, and he had doubted, and he had wondered if it could be possible, with a genuine and most manly humility.

Oh, how glad she was, and how winning and how beautiful; and through it all she arose, unconsciously, to a higher level. So high that, hours afterward, she could lie awake, and weep bitter tears of dread for the future and sorrow for the past, and feel the sting of the thought which told her how base it was to risk the happiness of a man who loved her.

"He would feel it so! It would all but kill him. He would not leave me? No, he could not give me up. I would give up all the world for him."

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She felt absolutely sure of Forsythe's fidelity, no matter what might come ; but then her cheeks were fire, for she remembered Kemp Henderson and the net which had been thrown and which had failed to hold him.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

TWO BY TWO.

THE very early morning train from the great city bore northward a family party of four which would have been a silent one but for Lena and Kaiser, excited by the novelty of being pulled out of bed, and dressed, and fed by gaslight. Wilhelm von Rahm was a man of resources in the management of children, and it was well he was, for Margaret drew more and more sorrowfully away into the darkness of her own thoughts, as the swift miles flew by, but then the journey was not a long one. Daynton would be reached in time for the breakfast of the older half of the party and for a moderately early arrival at the farmhouse.

"Kemp does not know we are coming," said Margaret; "but it is just as well."

Kemp did not know indeed, and the thought of such a thing came to him when he arose, only to be crowded aside by a great troop of other thoughts, and by a rush of mingled emotions in the tumultuous surge of which he was as yet unable to discern the swelling tide of a new life.

He dressed and went down to breakfast, still discussing with himself the precise hour when he ought to make his appearance at Mr. Latimer Raynor's office, to receive the fulfilment of the promises made the previous evening.

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There was an uncommonly reserved and dignified air about him, and it occurred to Aunt Maud that he looked well, for one so young, in the character of head of the family.

That was not exactly the idea in the head of Nell Davenport. She had received from Aunt Maud the vague assurance that the worst threat of the family disaster had somehow been disarmed or warded off; but she fairly burned for such an explanation with Kemp as should relieve her from the load of appearing to acquiesce in his bountiful purposes relating to her own future. The very kindliness of his older-brother-like greeting of her that morning fell upon her galled pride like the first hot medical application upon a fresh burn. She did not try to account to herself for the intensity of her feeling; but it grew upon her, through all the suppressed quiet of the breakfast-time, until, when they arose, and Aunt Maud stepped for a moment into the kitchen, the expression of it burst from her:

"Kemp Henderson, I must see you in the parlor! I have something to say to you!"

"Certainly."

An assenting inclination of his head and a half-painful smile, as he followed her, and then he himself closed the door behind them after they were in.

She could not for her life think how to begin, and while she was vainly searching her soul for the word she wanted to utter, he came to her aid with:

"It is hardly time to talk of some things, Nell. I am not ready. I think I can assure you, how-

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ever, that you need have no anxiety with reference to your pecuniary affairs. Any advances you may require—"

"Advances? Aunt Maud has told me all! Do you think, for one moment, that I would consent to such a thing? That I would be a dependent upon you? A robber, too, driving you from your own home? I see it now. It is your dislike for me that forbids you to stay here, and your sense of honor which forbids you to drive me out! I am not a child—a football—I will not be a pauper."

"Nell—Miss Davenport—"

"Hear me! It may be indelicate, unwomanly; but I am all alone, and I must speak for myself. Not one dollar! Not one cent! I can hardly eat or sleep, under a roof where my presence is not of right but of gentlemanly sufferance! But for Aunt Maud's feelings—"

"You have said too much, Miss Davenport."

She had said it vehemently, the words she had not meant to say, telling the bitterness she had not meant to tell, and hated herself for revealing; but the storm of her long-pent feeling had not yet exhausted itself.

"You! Provide for me! What right have you? Where is your sister Margaret, and what have you done for her, in all these years? It was my coming and my mother's that drove her away from her family and her home. Do you think I will profit now by her absence, and live on that which should be her support? You do not know me, Kemp Henderson."

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He was beginning to. She had shown him as much as was possible in five minutes of the depths of character whose existence he had already more than suspected, and there was a singularly triumphant vibration in his voice as he again attempted, more successfully, to take some part in the conversation.

"I will say but one thing now. Much of my father's property was in real estate. Your mother was entitled to one third of that, and you are her sole heiress. Anything now advanced to you will be rigidly charged against your property. You will only be spending your own."

He made no mention of any legal quirks and quibbles of the statute laws concerning inheritance and succession, and Nell was no lawyer. She could but stare in his face, and exclaim:

"Property! Real estate! Mine! I thought there was nothing left. Aunt Maud told me so."

"So it seemed. The arrangement I at first proposed was fitted to that idea. It will be very different now, however. I said you had better wait. I promise you an honest accounting. I do indeed. You shall be robbed of nothing, Miss Davenport. I beg you will excuse me from saying anything more."

It was cruelly considerate for Kemp to walk out of the room and out of the house, as he did, merely to give Nell Davenport an opportunity for the readjustment of her astonished and disordered thoughts and purposes. He told himself that was the reason of his going, and he may have believed

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it. At least until he discovered that his own internal forces were every way as tumultuously mutinous as ever Nell's could have been. He needed a turn in the orchard and over the ridge of the brown pasture on the hillside, quite as much as she did her opportunity to throw herself into a chair by the window, and hide her face in her hands, while she strove to recall, and justify the all but hysterical incoherence of her unexpected outbreak.

There was no worldly wisdom in Aunt Maud, and all she knew was that something dreadfully disagreeable had come to pass between Nell and Kemp. She loved them both so well! So she slipped into the parlor, and her soft, motherly hand was passing soothingly along the glossy darkness of Nell's hair in its seventh caressing stroke, when a sound of wheels that came along the road ceased in front of the gate, and it was needful to look through the window.

"Margaret? That must be her husband and her children. They have come! Oh, Nell!"

Nell rose, and followed her like one in a dream.

She knew, at a glance, the tall, handsome, well-dressed lady, who was now so frantically hugging Aunt Maud in the doorway, and she noticed the fine-looking, yellow-bearded gentleman who was leading the two pretty little ones through the gate, but it was if they had all fallen from the sky. Perhaps as if they had brought a part of it with them.

Sobs, kisses, and then Aunt Maud almost pushed her niece aside to rush forward toward Lena and Kaiser.

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There was a great light in the proud eyes of Wilhelm von Rahm when he saw all that.

Margaret looked wistfully around the old, familiar room as if, perhaps, her father's face might yet have been the next to welcome her, and Nell half shrank from the sad earnestness of that look.

"Nell? Sister Nell? Is it you? We are friends, are we not? Won't you forgive me?"

"Forgive you!"

There was no time given for explanation by the impulsive hunger of Margaret's sorrow, and Nell found herself weepingly hugged into a sister's place before she had breath to tell her gladness of it.

"Kemp? Where is he, Aunt Maud? Is he not here?"

He might not have been if he had not seen, from the ridge, the coming of that carriage, and more than guessed its errand. He was in the door from the back-room now, and another hasty stride forward brought to Nell a fresh astonishment.

There was Margaret's bearded, proud-looking husband, shaking Kemp's hand with the air of a man who cannot express himself. He made out to say:

"My brother! I am sorry for you this day. God be as good to you as you have been to me."

Margaret's quick eyes read Nell's look of wonder.

"He has not told you? That is like him! We owe him everything. Kemp! Brother!"

More and more like a dream did it all seem to float, and swim before the astonished vision of Nell

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Davenport, till little Lena timidly took her dropped and listless hand, appealing to her with :

" Please, are you one of my aunties ?"

Kaiser was monopolizing Aunt Maud at the moment, and Nell caught up Lena with a surprised, grateful :

" Yes, I am, dear. I am your Aunt Nelly."

" My name is Lena von Rahm. His name is Kaiser. Mamma cried a good deal yesterday. What are you crying for ?"

Kemp was particularly glad of the presence of von Rahm. It was a grand relief to have another man in the family, with whom he could decently draw aside and walk out of the house for practical conversation, while the women and children should manage the troublesome business of adjusting themselves to the situation.

Not that Kemp had any idea of sharing with his brother-in-law the custody of the Raynor secret, or the burden of the difficult task so strangely thrown upon himself.

He said something about property and the uncertainties yet attending the loss of the *Hermetic*.

" There can be no haste. Meantime I shall give it my entire attention. I shall soon, I think, be able to show you a statement."

" You ? To me ? Do you think I would ask you a question ? You do not think so meanly of me as that, I hope ?"

" In due time then."

" I trust you with my life ! It would not be worth much this day but for you."

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There was likely to be perfect accord on that side of the family, and much oil was spreading at the same time over the troubled waters in the parlor. There was nothing in the least degree unpleasant to Nell Davenport, somehow, in sitting by in silence while Aunt Maud and Margaret copiously exchanged opinions upon the apparently inexhaustible subject of Kemp Henderson's good qualities. She was even glad to know that they had thought well of him ; but when she happened to glance through the window at the two men in the front yard under the great elm, and discovered one of them in the very act of looking mournfully upon her own face, her heart almost stopped beating for a moment.

"What shall I say? How can I look him in the face? I have been so foolishly unjust to him. It was all his fault too!"

A flush of self-justifying indignation helped her a very little, but the size of her grievance grew less and less while she tried to pet and nourish it. She had not given him time or opportunity for explanation, and had taken for granted the view of his supposed conduct which was most unfavorable to him. Not that only, but she had told him so.

Nobody living can tell where thoughts come from, and it was, at that moment, more as if the thing had been whispered in her ear :

"If he had not seemed so splendid every other way I would not have cared so much. I could not bear—and then I would not be—"

She paused right there and ceased to listen to

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suggestions which aroused within her a quick instinct closely akin to fear. She dared not let herself go far enough to ask if there had been any special, deeper reason for her strong feeling relating to Kemp. It was a safer amusement to pick up Kaiser and let him study her face with his great blue German eyes, while Lena patronizingly recounted the wonderful things he could do and the history and hopes of his several teeth.

Dinner-time came sooner than any one expected, thanks to the excitement and the talk; and after that it behooved Kemp to make his trip to town. Von Rahm went with him, that he might not miss the afternoon train, and the three women were left to the sure process of drawing nearer and nearer together, all around; and Aunt Maud found herself more and more deeply exercised over the problem of what could have been the trouble between her nephew and Nell Davenport. Margaret von Rahm thought she had never met any one so sweet and lovable as either of those two. She had always loved Aunt Maud, and it would be so easy to make a sister of Nell.

Von Rahm quietly refused to acquire any further knowledge at present of the condition of the Henderson estate, or to stand in the way of Kemp's business for the day, whatever it might be. The latter was therefore speedily free to the more careful locking up of the ghastly skeleton in the Raynor family closet.

There had been a delicately romantic crisis, exquisitely managed and gotten away with, at the

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Raynor mansion that morning. Not that any member of the family circle, including Lord Bulleshue, had retired the night before in ignorance of the great happiness which had come to Carlton Forsythe. Katherine had informed her mother, at the earliest opportunity, and his lordship had manufactured one for himself to grasp his friend's hand crushingly, and say :

" Lord bless you, my boy, I was sure you'd win. You made the running down the home-stretch in splendid style. Distanced everybody. But then, my dear fellow, you had the inside track, and you were not handicapped by anything."

That was a good deal the truth of the case. Anybody would have given long odds in favor of such an entry as Carlton Forsythe for a matrimonial cup.

The breakfast-table figured as something of an ordeal. Both the winners, so to speak, were there, and Lord Bulleshue's honest heart fairly bubbled over in high spirits as he contemplated the unexpectedly subdued look of Forsythe and the expression of happy humility on the face of Katherine.

" I'm off for a drive with Link Bishop," he said, at the end of his second cup of coffee. " If he's found another fractious pair, I'm his man to-day."

The pair yet seated at the table he was leaving were grateful to him, but did not say so. They had a drive of their own to take, after a bit of a private talk should be had between Mr. Raynor and Forsythe in the library.

A brief, cordial, gentlemanly talk was that, and

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Forsythe's disclaimer of any wish to speak of worldly considerations was as frankly met :

" Little to be said, my dear sir. She is the sole heiress of the Raynor estate. You will not need that yet a while. It will all come to you in due time."

" A long time, I hope. We shall hardly live so extravagantly as to spend my present income."

" Glad of that. Nothing so vulgar as ostentation. Mere waste is plebeian. Sorry I must break away. It is a day of great pressure for me at the bank. Mr. Henderson's death, you know."

" Certainly ! Of course ! So inconsiderate of me to forget it. But when a man is so happy."

" All right, my dear sir. You have my best wishes."

And there was perfect sincerity in every word of Mr. Raynor's congratulations.

It was a pity indeed that the key had not yet been turned in the closet door by the hand of Kemp Henderson ; for when Forsythe and Katherine set out for their delicious, betrothal morning drive, the skeleton got out, unseen by any eyes but hers, and sprang to a seat beside her. All the way going and coming she feared to turn her head lest she should see him ; or to sit reasonably distant from Carlton Forsythe, lest the fleshless form should crowd in between them, as he might do, some day ; and every now and then she could hear him whispering in her ear :

" What would he say if he knew that your father was a forger, and that Kemp Henderson could send

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him to Sing Sing? You and I know it. You are betraying him. You dare not tell him."

Tell him?

She had never known what fear was till now—now that love had come to teach her the terror of its loss.

There was good in that skeleton, after all, and he was doing better work than he could have done in his closet. He was destroying, as with the hand of death, idol after idol that might otherwise have disputed with Forsythe the best places in the temple of Katherine's heart. Down they went, and she was a better, sadder, wiser woman for it, and her husband would never know how she came to set such an all-absorbing value on his love. It had been, in that morning hour of bliss and agony, a sort of Aaron's rod-serpent, pitilessly swallowing every other serpent brought within its reach by the awful secret of her father's sin and peril.

Outwardly, indeed, Forsythe and Katherine conducted themselves admirably, as became them, and it was odd that Polly Magoon, when she saw them go by, should be so penetrating.

"That's not the English lord. I s'pose they brought him here for show. That's the man that's really going to have her. They say he's rich. Well, so is she. What they call a good match. Humph! It'll be a long time before Nell Davenport goes a buggy-riding with that lord again."

She saw him, that very day, dashing by in company with Link Bishop, and did not feel at all surprised, two hours later, to find herself in the same

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seat, behind the same pair of black horses, as Link himself said :

" Now Lord Bulleshue and I have taken the nonsense out of them. They had a heap of it on board when we started."

So had Polly, seemingly, but, for some unexplained reason, the horses, and their driver, and the girl who sat beside him returned from that excursion in a specially quiet, contented, undemonstrative mood, and Link said to her, as he helped her to alight :

" I'll come around, this evening, Polly, and we'll talk it over. I don't believe there's anybody looking—"

So quickly he did it—she had no time to draw away her rosy face—but she need not have trembled so, for Link was right, and not a living soul was looking.

" O Link—"

" Bless you, Polly ! I'll come. I do hope no one else will."

Well, so did Polly, though she failed to utter her wish, and it was her own wisdom, when Link and evening came, which led them to prefer the shady stroll along the trout brook rather than the intrusion-threatened parlor, and enabled old Mr. Magoon to tell two or three later arrivals :

" She's not at home. There was somebody else kem in, a while ago, and I reckon she sot out for a walk, somew'er's."

All that was later in the day, and it was not yet the middle of the afternoon when Kemp Henderson

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seated himself at the office table, opposite Mr. Latimer Raynor. His meeting with that gentleman brought a fresh surprise with it, every way equal to those already given him by his previous discoveries of the things it was possible for Mr. Raynor to do and say.

So calm he looked, so sternly self-possessed ; but there was more than his usual polished courtesy in his greeting. It was singularly as if the warmth of it were genuine and human.

" Everything is ready for you, Mr. Henderson. I am glad you did not come earlier."

" Thank you. Shall we proceed to business ?"

It was the rapid work of two clear heads, accustomed to the kind of mathematics they were dealing with, and when it was over, Kemp remarked :

" That will do very well. The few details that remain will be mere matters of course. I think we can keep our secret now."

" If you will permit me, Mr. Henderson, I will give you one secret more to keep—if you have not guessed it already."

" A secret ?"

" It should remain one, I think, but I wish you to do me justice. Has it not occurred to you to wonder at the course of action of which these papers and figures are the net result ?"

" Assuredly. Knowing you as I do, and knowing you must have calculated upon the return of my father."

" Very naturally. Shall I tell you, then, that no such wonder came into my mind until to-day ?

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Not until the load was lifted, by your magnanimous conduct, and by one other thing, and by the certainty that I had reached the end of it?"

"The end of what, Mr. Raynor?"

"I think you will see. I have drawn, to-day, the first sane breath I have drawn for more than three months. Perhaps for a longer time than that. If you had pressed this matter, the relief, the healing, could not have come. The fact might not have been made immediately manifest, but you would have sent to prison a lunatic, if I had permitted myself to live to go there. I doubt that. Here I have gone on, losing about a quarter of a million, previously won in stock gambling, and therefore no actual part of my estate; and with it nearly half of my other property; and it seemed to me, much of the time, as if all the rest, and more than all of it, were gone At other times as if I had a perfect right to do anything needed to make good my losses. I am perfectly sane now."

Kemp had been looking at him steadily in the eyes, and the thought in his heart had been:

"He is telling the truth. Everything he has said and done proves it. Such a man could not be a rascal until the fear of losing his god made a lunatic of him."

The words which came to his lips were:

"If we tear the signatures from the checks, they will serve equally well for memoranda. The notes you have destroyed. I think I will burn this."

He had drawn from his pocket the forged power-of-attorney, and a match from the little bronze safe

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on the table flashed into flame in his fingers as he spoke.

That was the end, and Mr. Raynor drew a tremendously long breath, as he saw the black flakes of burnt paper flicker fitfully in the empty grate.

"You know so much of our family affairs, Mr. Henderson, permit me to mention to you the engagement of my daughter Katherine to Mr. Carlton Forsythe—"

"One of my best friends! Please give her my hearty congratulations. By the way, my sister Margaret is visiting me. Her husband, the Baron von Rahm, came with her, but has returned to the city. He has charge of the foreign business of Bond & Co., the bankers—"

"Correspondents of ours, to a small extent. Very good house. I shall be glad to meet your brother-in-law, in due time. The ladies of my family will take great pleasure in calling upon your sister. My intimate relations with your father justify a disregard of ceremony."

There had been a strong odor of that sort of thing in the banker's effort to recover his tone and manner, after his singular explanation of his financial vagaries, and it savored favorably for his sanity.

Kemp did not longer protract so unpleasant an interview, and he had hardly disappeared before Mr. Raynor sent a messenger for his carriage and drove rapidly home.

It was an odd hour for him to return, and the

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oddness of it brought him into an immediate private conference with two pale and anxious women.

"Oh, Mr. Raynor, what is it?"

"Father? No, it is not bad news. I see it in your face. Has Kemp—"

"He has behaved splendidly, my dear. All is over. Every trace of danger is destroyed. If he had been my own son—"

He paused a moment, and then there came a few rapid sentences about Margaret and her husband, and almost a command that the carriage, yet waiting at the door, should be employed in an instant visit of friendly condolence at the farmhouse.

"I owe that much to Kemp Henderson. So do you. Do it perfectly. Do it now!"

There was that in Katherine's heart, just then, which made her more than willing. There would be no skeleton sitting beside her on such an errand as this. He was locked up, her father said, and even Mrs. Raynor joined her eagerly in the simple neighborly act which might help to bar him in. They reached and left the farmhouse before Kemp arrived. Margaret von Rahm and even Aunt Maud accepted unreservedly whatever they said of Mr. Raynor's and their own esteem for his old associate and friend, but Nell Davenport, sitting slightly withdrawn and all but silent, could hardly believe her ears, for it was Katherine herself who found occasion to say:

"And then, too, Mrs. von Rahm, we have such an esteem for your brother—"

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"Kemp? I'm so glad you appreciate him. There are not many such men as he is."

"Indeed there are not. You should be proud of him!"

Nell listened, open-eyed, for she was forced to tell herself:

"She actually means it! She is speaking the truth!"

It was just at that point that the fact of their coming in such a way struck her with so unaccountable a pang.

What right had they to come, as if they were members of the family? And to talk in that way of Kemp, as if he belonged to them? Could it be—"

The room swam a little, and she did not put the rest of her question in words; but the formal visit of condolence was necessarily brief, and it was not long before the mourners were alone again.

Nell, yes, and the others, were glad it was so when Kemp drove up, a little later. They were almost astonished that he should express no surprise when they told him of the Raynor call, and Nell wondered again that his suddenly suppressed, significant smile should hurt her as it did.

"He seems to take it as a matter of course. There is something I do not understand."

A secret, undoubtedly, and one to which she had no right, but which Kemp might wish to tell his sister and his aunt. It would be considerate for Nell, therefore, to take a little walk, after tea. And she did so, the lonely wayside path along the road,

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under the old elms, seeming nearly gloomy enough to suit her, in the dying light.

No one saw her, when she slipped away, but it was not many minutes before Aunt Maud missed her and exclaimed:

"Poor thing! She's lonely. She doesn't half feel at home. I'm going after her, this minute—"

"Aunt Maud!"

"You, Kemp? Yes, go. Do bring her right back. She's almost broken-hearted!"

He was already in the doorway, and he guessed the right direction, striding away in a sudden spasm of self-reproach, and telling himself he had been lacking—he could not tell precisely where or how. It was the unsettled state of that question which left him, when he caught up with Nell, all unprovided with a decent excuse for following her and in a condition to be as completely taken by the surprise of it as was the maiden herself.

"Kemp? Mr. Henderson!"

"I've come out after you, Nell. If I have said or done anything to give you pain I am sorry for it from the bottom of my heart. Won't you forgive me?"

"Forgive you? After what I've said and the wicked things I have thought about you? I've been dreadfully unjust—"

"Have you? Well, can't you forgive me for that, Nell? I shall be miserable if you do not. Come to the house now, and—and—Aunt Maud loves you, and so does Maggie. I shall go away

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soon, and not trouble you any more. I'm sorry, too, that you should hate me so—"

"Hate you? I? Have I made it seem so?"

There are talks—it may be all are so, more or less—when two words are uttered every time one is spoken, and Kemp and Nell had been saying wonderful things, in that swift, astonished colloquy. She heard his spoken words, and she heard too the other things which were breaking forth in his tones, manner, even in what she knew must be the expression of his face, half hidden in the deepening shadows of the trees. She was glad to know they were hiding her own as well, for all the secret of her injustice toward Kemp, the womanly fierceness of her jealousy lest he had done, might do, something unworthy of a man to whom she was anxious to ascribe all worthiness—the secret of it was coming to her, and she knew it was coming to him, and she was trembling from head to foot.

There was a silence then, and it seemed as if the rustle of a leaf could be heard at the very farmhouse; but it was broken before it grew painful.

"I cannot be a brother to you, Nell. You will not let me be more. I must go. Shall we return to the house now?"

"Kemp! Miss Raynor?"

"Is to marry my friend Mr. Forsythe. Nell?"

She had herself stirred into the cup of her humiliation the last drop of bitterness, in that questioning confession of her jealousy.

"What can you think of me?"

"Nell! Nell, I love you! It is a strange time

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to say it, but I have been finding it out for days and days, and I cannot keep my secret."

He had kept the secrets of others well enough, but now the knowledge of this one was no news to Nell Davenport, after all. The moment it was spoken she felt that she too had known it, she could not say how long, and she hardly more than whispered :

"Your secret, Kemp? Then why should I keep mine?"

There was no need for any immediate return to the house. Aunt Maud and Margaret were putting Lena and Kaiser to bed. When they came downstairs, at last, and looked around the sitting-room and into the parlor, Aunt Maud exclaimed :

"Not come back yet! Why, what can have happened?"

Margaret's heart was younger and quicker in its instincts, and her face suddenly lighted up with a glad smile.

"Aunt Maud! Can it be possible? I hope it is. If they are gone much longer I shall be sure of it."

"You don't say! Why, Maggie, I never thought of that."

Half an hour later, a half hour very short and wonderfully long, Kemp Henderson and Nell came slowly through the gate.

"I am sure they would be glad to have it so, Nell, if they knew."

"I do so wish they could know. Mother and father both."

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"Who shall say they do not? I have almost felt as if he were with me, these last days. At least I know what he would say now."

They were thinking then of those who could not see them, forgetful of the eyes which could, and so they walked on, through the doorway and into the light.

There was no need for either of those two eager readers to mistake the meaning they were waiting and hoping for, and both Kemp and Nell knew what was meant by that glad, silent questioning.

"Kemp," exclaimed Margaret, "tell me, is it so?"

Aunt Maud's spectacles dropped jingling to the floor, and she sprang to her feet like a girl, as Kemp put his arm, strongly, graspingly, around the waist of Nell Davenport, and responded, triumphantly:

"Yes, Margaret. She is mine."

"Glory!" shouted Aunt Maud. "It's just what his father and her mother would ha' prayed for. 'Pears to me I've been a praying for it myself, and didn't know it!"

* * * * * * *

Some few days after that, Lord Bulleshue remarked to Link Bishop:

"I suppose it would be of no use, now, to speak to Mr. Henderson about our deer-killing. Forsythe has concluded to tear himself away long enough to be sensible for a fortnight or so."

"Long time for a man in his situation."

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"Think so? What do you say to going into camp with us, up among the mountains?"

"Great honor," growled Link. "Have a good time, too. No doubt of it."

Then he cleared his throat very strongly, and added:

"I'm just as much obliged, but then the fact is, I'm going to be married in a couple of weeks. I was saying to Kemp Henderson, only yesterday—"

"Married? Bless my soul! This is the most wonderful country! Did you say married?"

"That's what's the matter."

"And it must be a good while since any of your family were drowned. I can tell you what it is, I'm dead beat. I'll do the mountains and the deer-killing, and then I think I'd better go home. I'm not fitted for it. I'm not, indeed."

He had his deer-hunt without Link Bishop, and he remained long enough after that to assist at the wedding of Carlton Forsythe. It was a great social event, but none of the Henderson family circle could be present. Nevertheless, a few weeks later, when the first snows of winter made all the hillsides tell of the great whiteness it is possible for earthly things to wear, there was a quietly joyous gathering at the old farmhouse.

White, and still, and beautiful was everything that morning. Aunt Maud said she had never seen the valley look so peaceful.

Kisses and tears at the door, and then there was driven briskly away, up the Daynton road, with Link Bishop as volunteer "whip," an open sleigh,

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drawn by a spirited pair of coal-black horses, the very jingle of whose dancing bells seemed wild with wedding music. On the back seat of that sleigh, too happy to hear even the bells, sat Mr. and Mrs. Kemp Henderson.

THE END.

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